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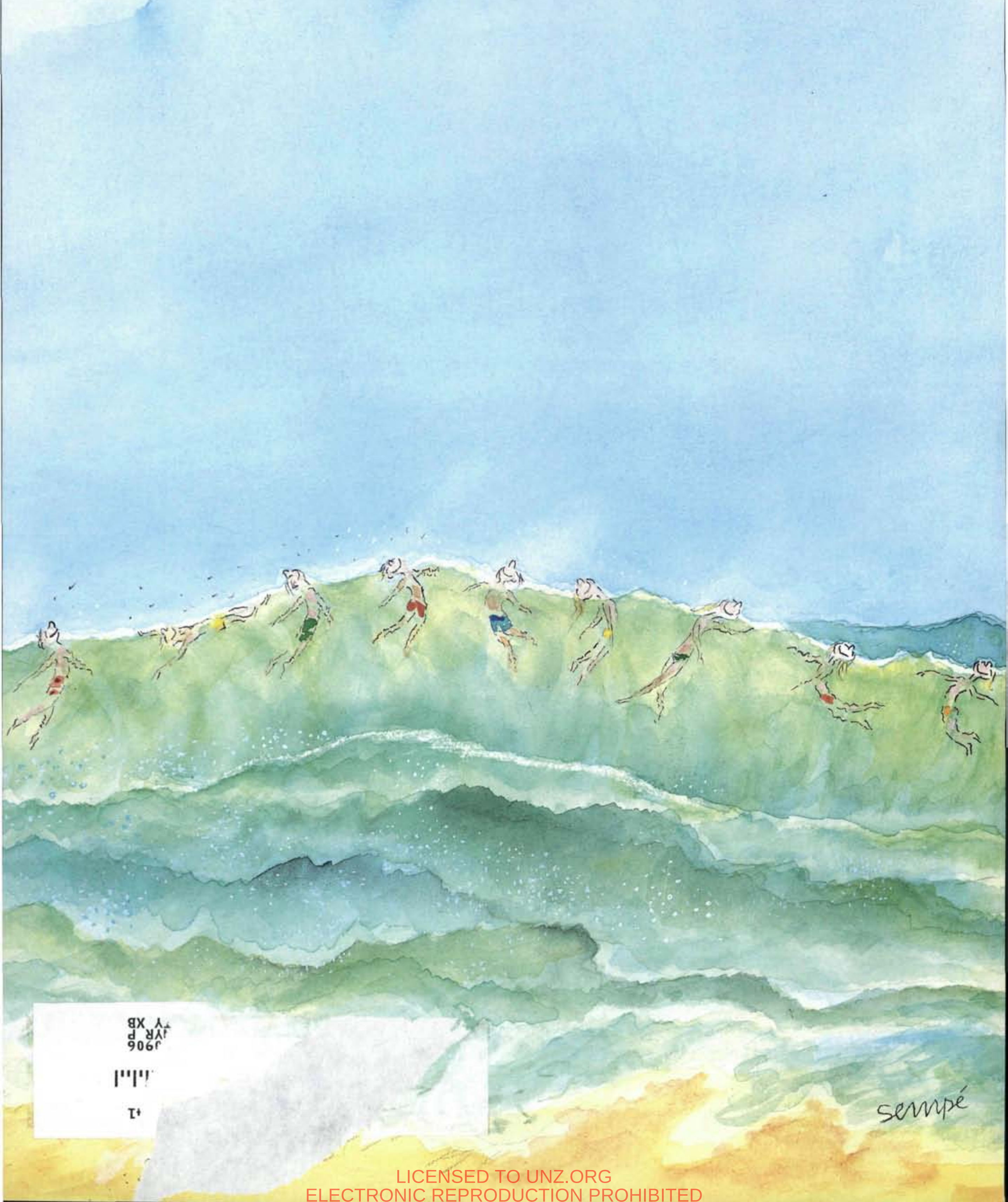
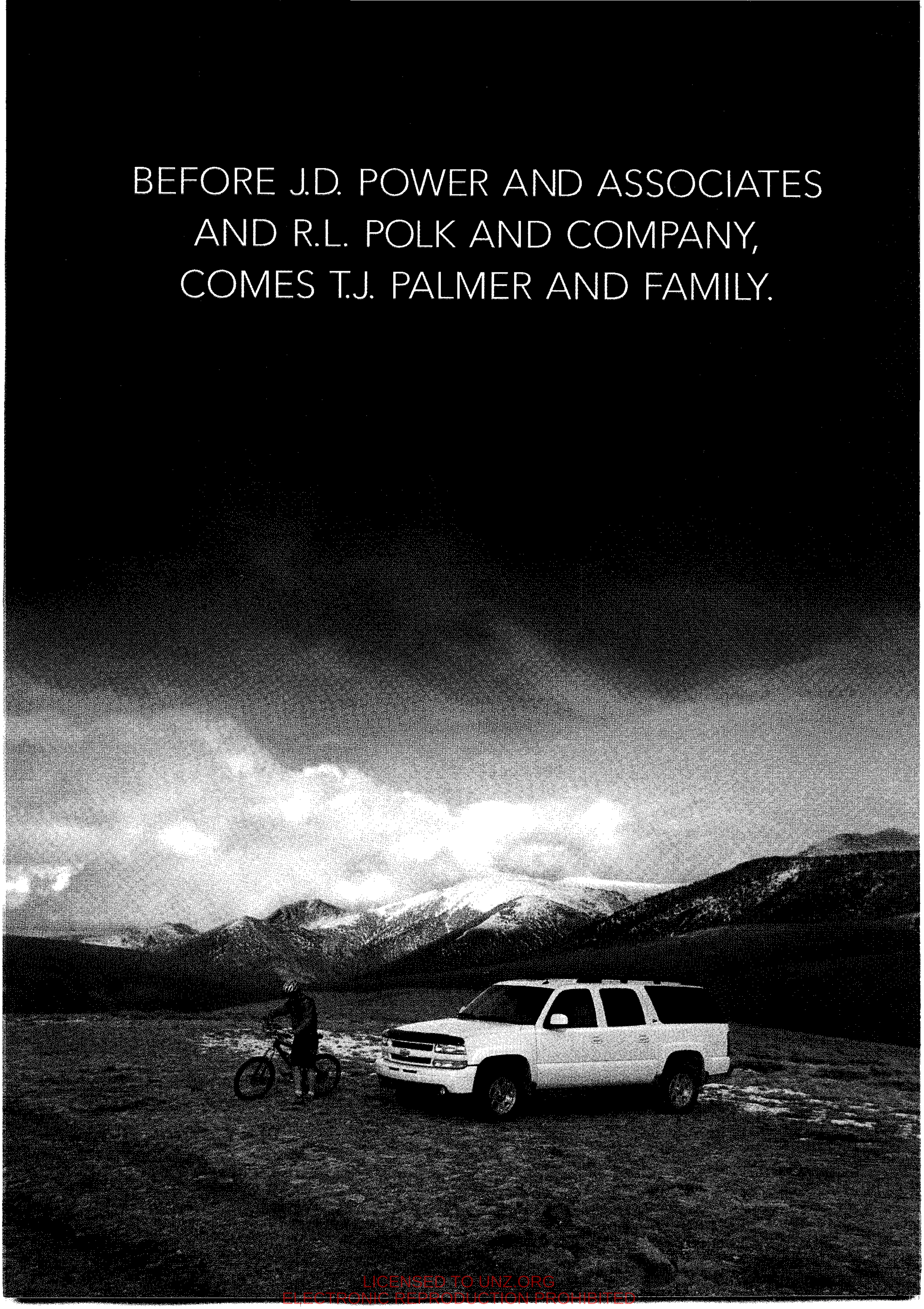
THE NEW YORKER

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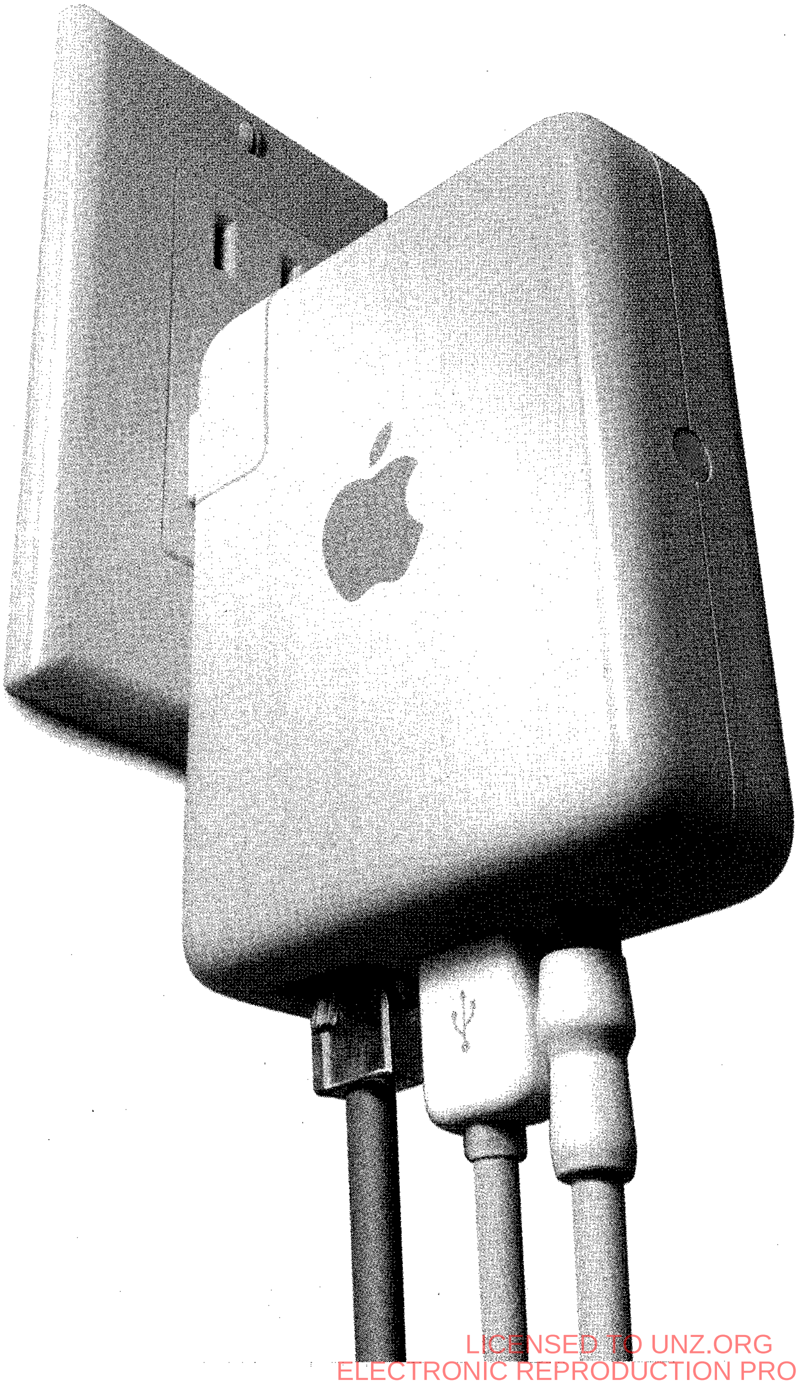
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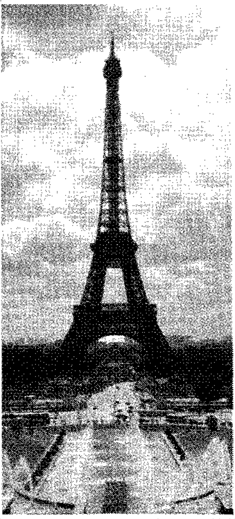

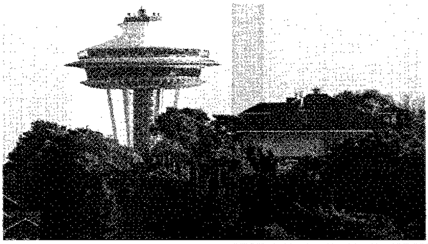

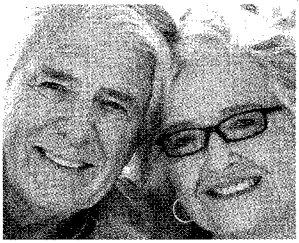

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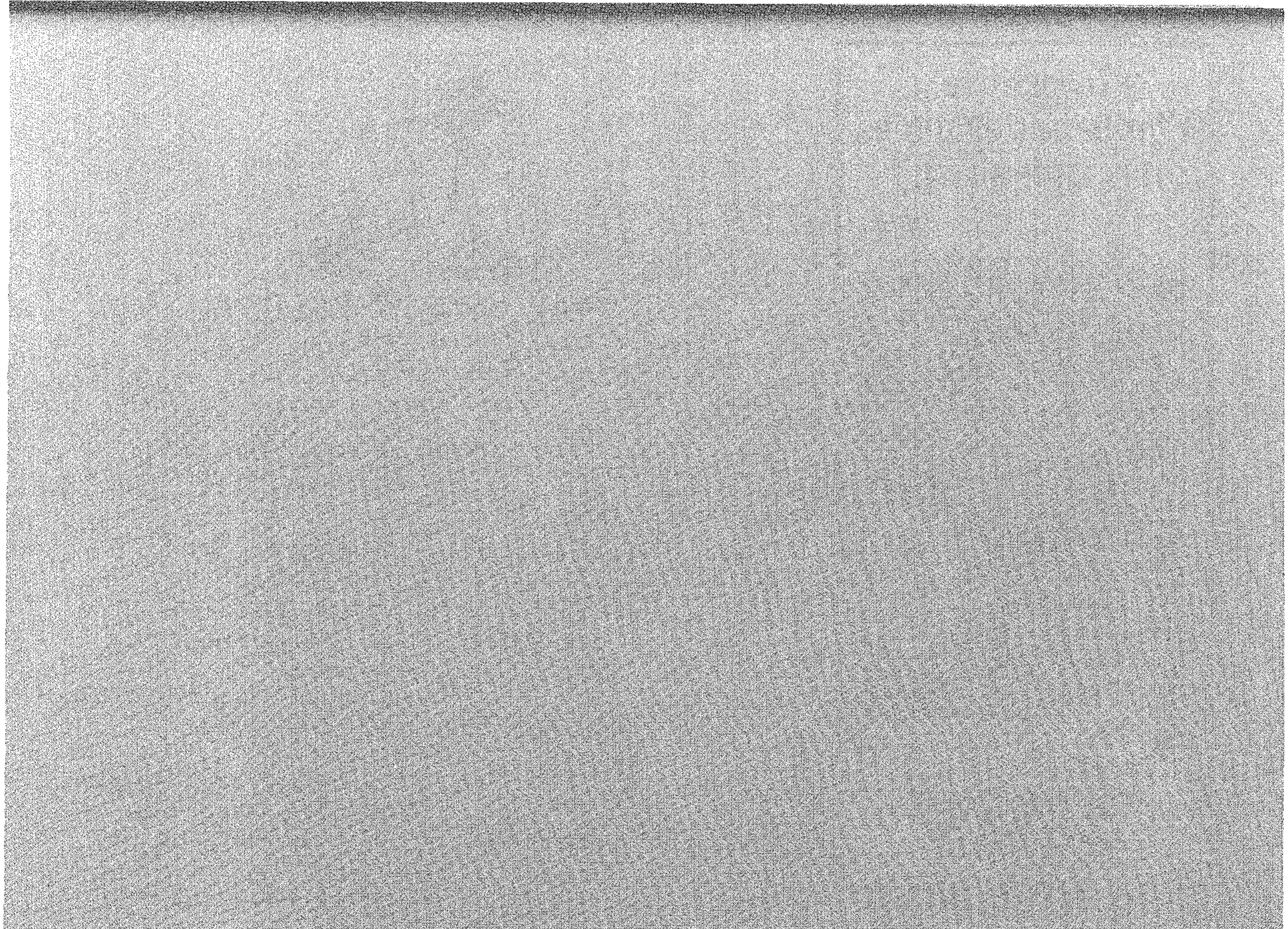

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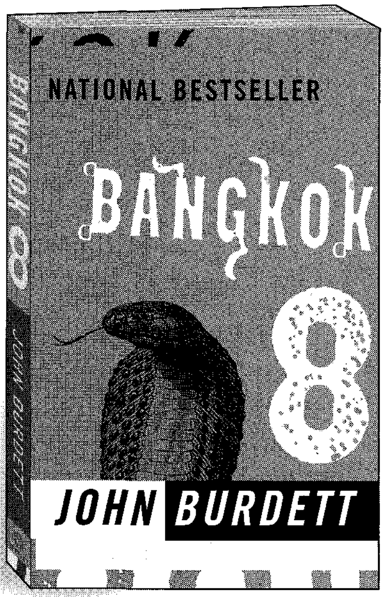

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THE NEW YORKER

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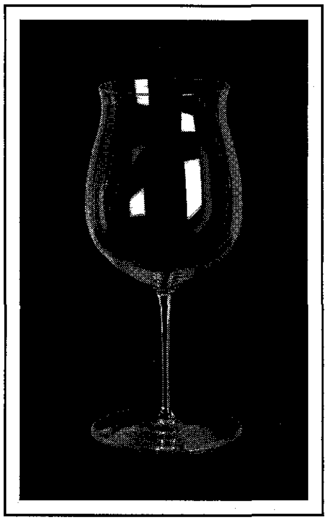

While the debate continues over real or perceived dangers of lead in crystal glassware, some authorities have issued regulations or advisories on the subject.

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See Rabbit Glasses at metrokane.com

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CONTRIBUTORS

Philip Gourevitch ("Damage Control," p. 50) is covering the Presidential campaign for the magazine. He is the author of "We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda."

Daniel Radosh (The Talk of the Town, p. 28), a freelance writer and contributing editor at *The Week*, writes a blog at Radosh.net.

Wayne Coyne (Art, p. 14), the lead vocalist for the Flaming Lips, did the artwork for their latest album, "Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots."

Eliza Griswold ("In the Hiding Zone," p. 34) has been awarded the Robert I. Friedman Award from the Fund for Investigative Journalism. Her poetry has also appeared in the magazine.

Galway Kinnell (Poem, p. 68) is the author of thirteen books of poetry, including "A New Selected Poems."

Annie Proulx (Fiction, p. 72) has a story collection, "Bad Dirt: Wyoming Stories 2," coming out in December.

Burkhard Bilger ("Nerd Camp," p. 64) is a staff writer and the author of "Noodling for Flatheads."

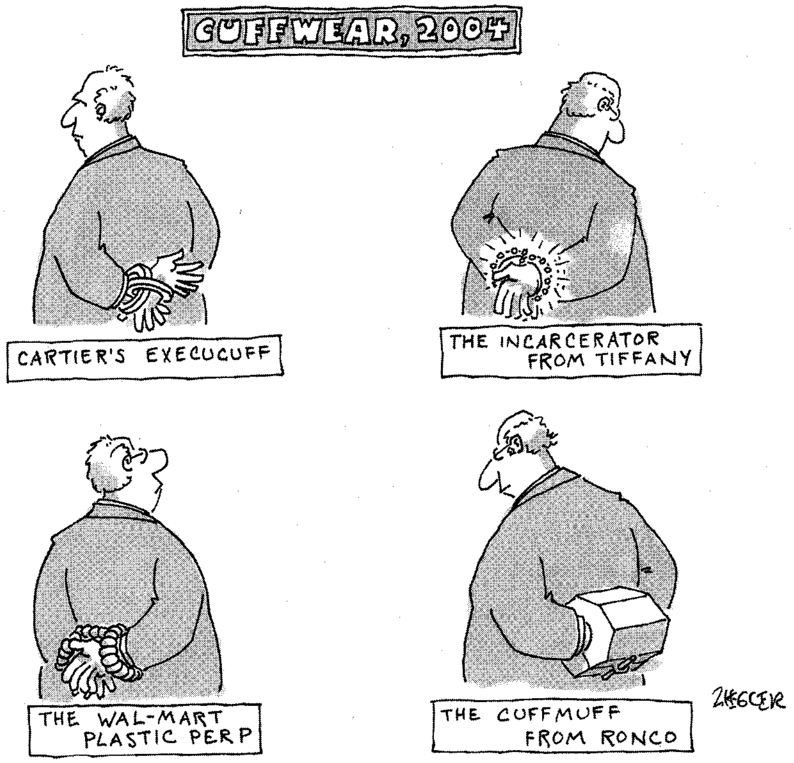
Susan Orlean ("The Outsiders," p. 44) has been writing for the magazine since 1987. A collection of her pieces, "My Kind of Place: Travel Stories from a Woman Who's Been Everywhere," will be published this fall.

John Updike (Books, p. 84) is a regular contributor of fiction, poetry, and criticism. A collection of his short fiction, "The Early Stories: 1953-1975," came out in October.

Hilton Als (The Theatre, p. 90), the author of "The Women," received the 2002-03 George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism.

John Baldessari (Art, p. 72) will have exhibitions in the fall at the Deutsche Guggenheim, in Berlin, and the Marian Goodman Gallery, in New York.

Nancy Franklin (On Television, p. 92) writes a column on television. ♦



THE MAIL

LEAVING HOME

Caitlin Flanagan felt abandoned when her mother went back to work when she was twelve ("To Hell with All That," July 5th). My own mother shaped me into the woman I am—independent, intelligent, responsible, ambitious—not by waiting for us to come home from school but by working during the day, attending school at night, letting me watch the evening news, and not monitoring whether I did my homework. She let me make decisions and mistakes on my own. She made me realize that the best parent is often not the one who gives up her life for her children or perpetually holds their hands but the one who opens doors for them and has the grace and trust to let them walk through those doors alone.
Brandy Moriah Wicker
Bedford, Texas

As the mostly stay-at-home mother of two daughters (now grown), I agree with much of what Flanagan says about the benefits of that arrangement for mother and child. But our society has not translated its lip service to motherhood into economic protections for mothers. Women who stay home with children are not compensated, either directly, through cash stipends, or indirectly, through tax breaks, and there is no pension plan for them. We do not make it easy for mothers to create flexible schedules: there is not enough quality child care available, and most workplaces fail to accommodate parents who want to balance work and home. Until that landscape changes, women who give up work are taking an enormous financial gamble.
Bonnie Sloane
Los Angeles, Calif.

Although she describes herself as an extreme case—"a hysteric by nature," with a fear of being home alone that "borders on the pathological"—Flanagan seems to believe that, because she was miserable when her mother went to work, all children everywhere feel the same. She even turns a home-cooked meal into a terrible punishment: "I was on my own, fretting about unseen dangers while the defrosting casserole sat unappetizingly on the counter, in a puddle of melt." Buck up: it's a casserole, not a Nietzschean abyss. Having worked up her mother's choice into a sad psychodrama, she writes that, for mothers—not fathers, a subject she barely mentions—the decision to work outside the home "will always be the stuff of grinding anxiety and regret." For her, maybe, but not for everyone.
Catharine Tunnacliffe
Toronto, Canada

While I've chosen part-time work as my answer to the dilemma that Flanagan discusses, I have deep respect for mothers who make different choices. Each has to solve this question based on her own personality, needs, and talents, balanced with those of her family. No one from the outside can know what is best for a family. What is known is that children thrive when mothers (and fathers) are loving, patient, and emotionally available—and that these qualities can be present whether a mother works or not.
Rebecca J. Danelski
Culver City, Calif.

Flanagan's focus is clearly on the middle class. Millions of poor mothers don't reap the spiritual benefits of (paid) work which professional women do. Because of welfare reform, many must work for benefits, often receiving less than minimum wage and inadequate labor-rights protections—a boon for employers. Welfare moms are not "trying to make partner"; they are cleaning parks, emptying wastebaskets, and trying not to get kicked off welfare. This increases the pressure on families, while keeping them just as poor.
Diane Pagen
Bronx, N.Y.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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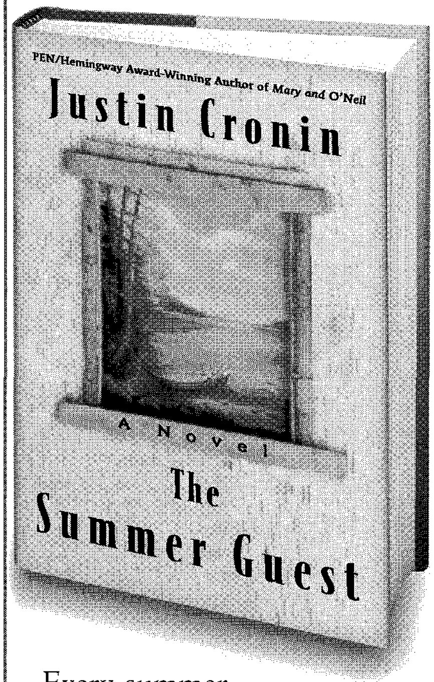

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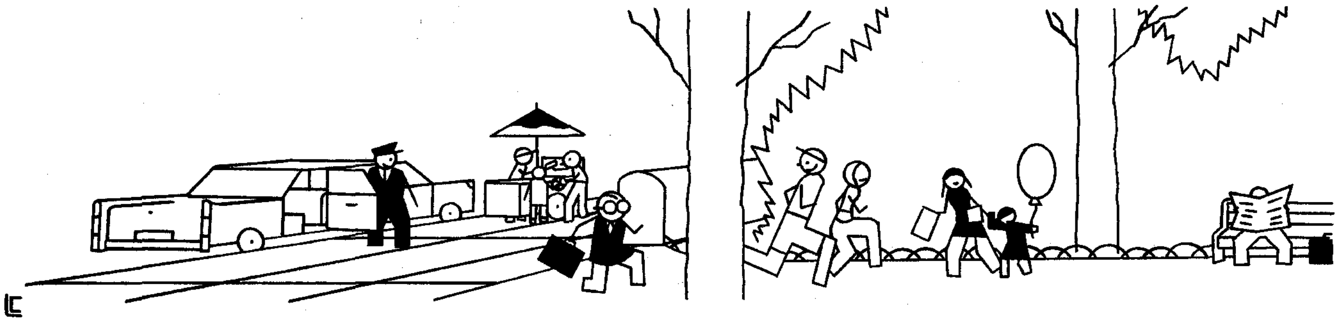

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25	26	27				

For expanded events listings, please visit www.newyorker.com/goingson.

THIS WEEK

RECORDED HISTORY

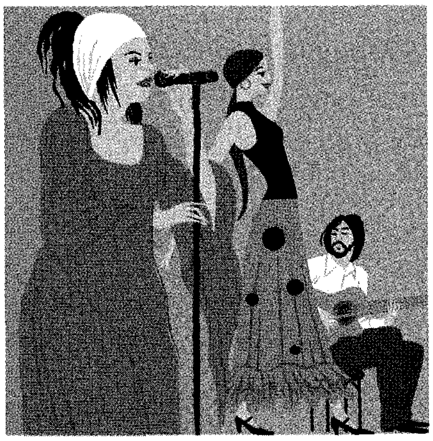
In the nineteen-twenties, Thomas Edison staged events around the country with his new phonograph; audiences were invited to compare the sound of the invention with the tones produced by a live singer. But things were not entirely on the up-and-up: Anna Case, the Metropolitan Opera singer (and reportedly Edison's secret lover), trained herself to sound like the machine in order to confuse the audience. Nicholas Brooke's new opera, "Tone Test," re-creates those historic demonstrations with two performers and an onstage "phonograph" that will produce an elaborate electronic soundscape. (Clark Studio Theatre, July 22-24; see Classical Music.)

THE SPIRIT OF KABUKI

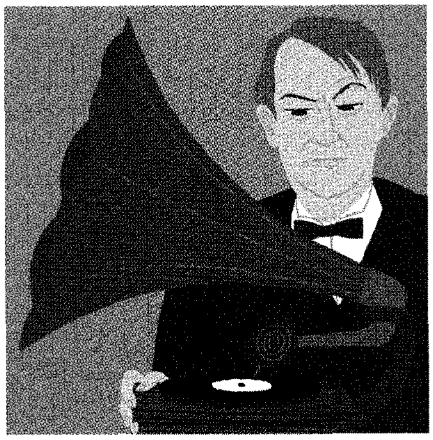
The forty-nine-year-old Kabuki actor Nakamura Kankuro V is the Japanese equivalent of a Barrymore or a Redgrave; his family has been a Kabuki dynasty since the seventeenth century. Nakamura's troupe, Heisei Nakamura-za, emphasizes the form's more comic and carnal aspects; this week's Lincoln Center performance, "The Summer Festival: A Mirror of Osaka," is the first New York appearance by any Japanese Kabuki troupe in fifteen years. It takes place inside a traditional wooden theatre, or *shibaigoya*, that includes both a *hanamichi* (central runway) and *sajiki* (cushioned floor seating). (Damrosch Park, through July 25; see Theatre.)

SPANISH WIZARDRY

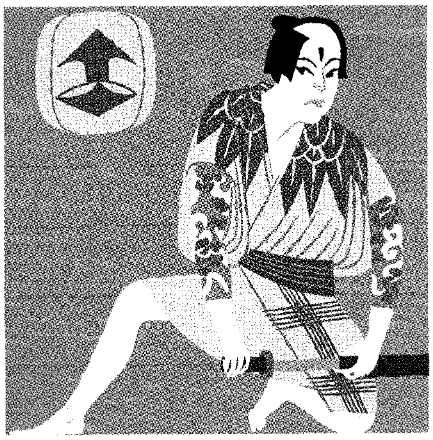
In the spirit of the musical polyglot Manu Chao, the nine-piece group Ojos de Brujo, from Barcelona, combines the passion of flamenco, the energy of hip-hop, and the anarchist spirit of punk. Their first Stateside tour, earlier this year, was hampered by overcrowding; police in Chicago broke up their show mid-set. This week, the group gives its fans proper room to spread out, with performances at SummerStage and S.O.B.'s. (July 22 and July 25; see Night Life.)



Ojos de Brujo, a nine-piece group from Barcelona, comes to town.

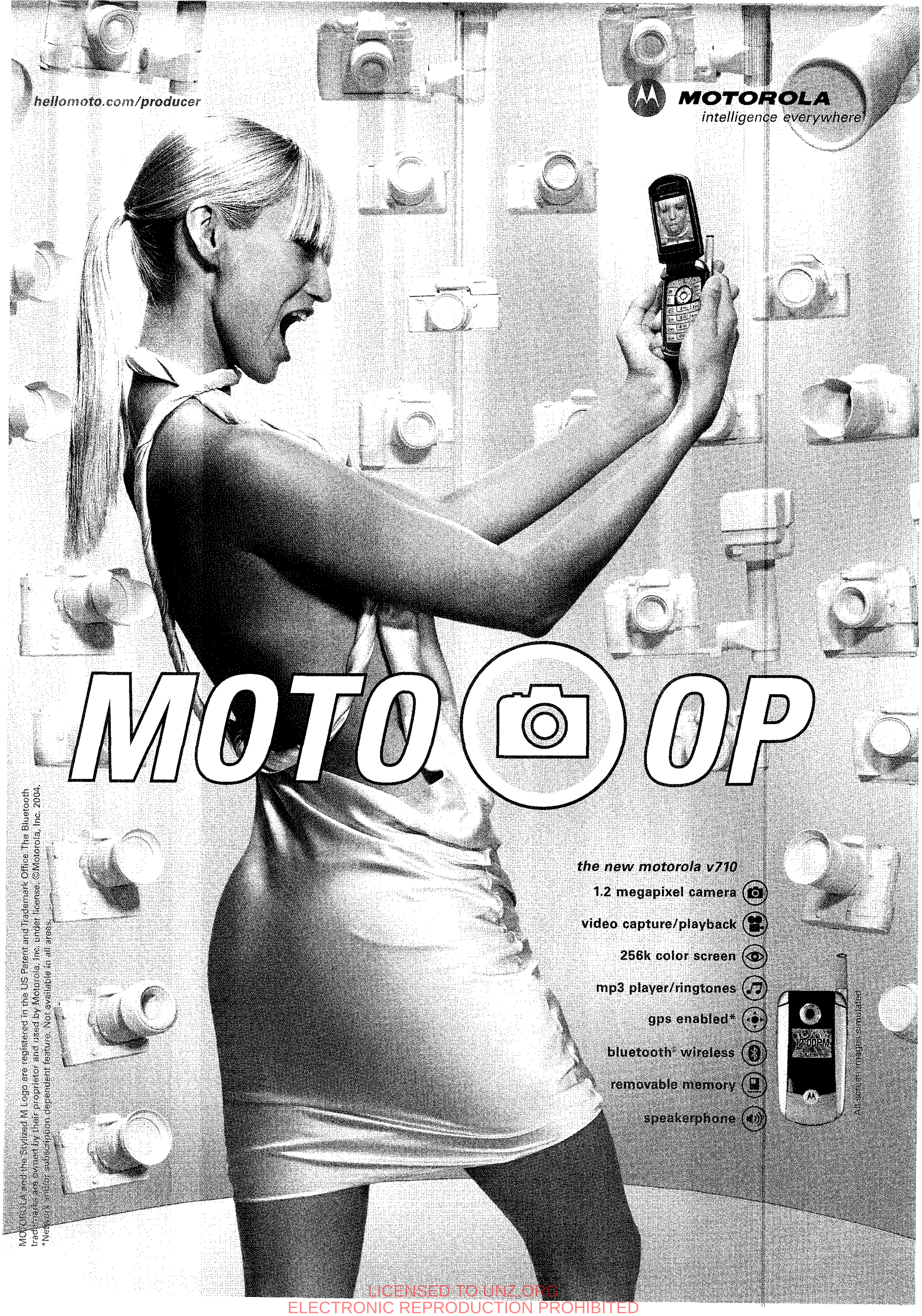


"Tone Test," an opera inspired by Edison's invention of the phonograph.



Nakamura Kankuro V and his Kabuki troupe perform in Damrosch Park.

JOSÉ LUIS MERINO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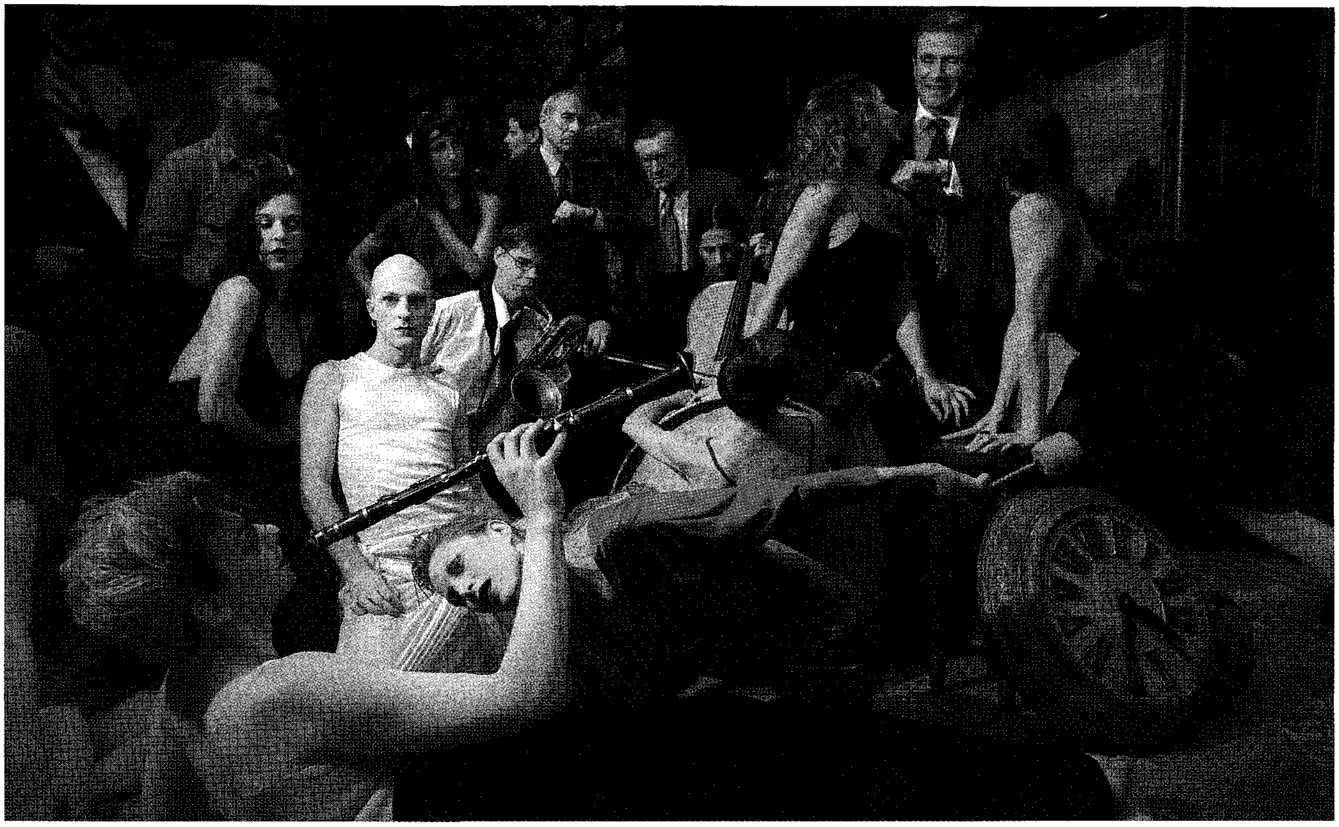
THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

AFTER THE FALL
Peter Krause and Carla Gugino star in a Roundabout Theatre Company revival of the Arthur Miller play. Directed by Michael Mayer. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

THE DAY EMILY MARRIED
Estelle Parsons leads the cast in a Primary Stages production of a new play by Horton Foote about newlyweds who move in with the bride's aged parents. Directed by Michael Wilson. In previews. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

DRACULA
A new musical inspired by the Bram Stoker horror story, starring Melissa Errico and Tom Hewitt, has a book by Christopher Hampton, music by Frank Wildhorn, and lyrics by Don Black. Directed by Des McAnuff. In previews. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)



"Homage to Max Beckmann," part of the "Forbidden Pictures" series by Larry Fink, at Powerhouse (see Photography).

THE ELEPHANT VANISHES
Simon McBurney's Complicite theatre presents a dramatized version of three stories by Haruki Murakami at the Lincoln Center Festival, performed in Japanese (with English supertitles) by actors from the Setagaya Theatre. July 21-24 at 8 and July 25 at 3. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

FICTION
The Roundabout Theatre Company presents a new play by Steven Dietz, in which a married couple suffer the consequences of reading each other's journals. With Emily Bergl, Tom Irwin, and Julie White. Directed by David Warren. In previews. Opens July 25 at 7. (Roundabout, Laura Pels Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

THE FROGS
Lincoln Center Theatre inaugurates its twentieth season with an expanded production of Stephen Sondheim and Burt Shevelove's musical from 1974, based on the Aristophanes comedy. With a new book by Nathan Lane, who plays the lead, Dionysos, and six new songs by Sondheim. Directed and choreographed by Susan Stroman, with sets by Giles Cadle and costumes by William Ivey Long. One preview on July 21. Opens July 22 at 6:45. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

FROM MY HOMETOWN
Kevin R. Free, André Garner, and Rodney Hicks play R. & B. stars who reminisce about their ascent to the Apollo stage in a musical evening that features eight original songs and twenty-four R. & B. and soul hits. Directed by Kevin Ramsey. Two previews on July 21. Opens July 22 at 6:45. (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 212-307-4100.)

GESHER THEATRE
Israel's Gesher Theatre marks the centenary of Isaac Bashevis Singer's birth with two plays based on his stories: "The Slave," performed in Hebrew and in Russian, and "Shosha," performed in Hebrew. All performances are accompanied by simultaneous English translation. Directed by Arye Gesher. "The Slave": July 20-23 at 8. "Shosha": July 24 at 8 and July 25 at 3. (John Jay Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St. 212-721-6500.)

ICE FACTORY '04
The gifted troublemakers Kyle Jarrow and Alex Timbers of Les Frères Corbusier open the third week of the Soho Think Tank's summer festival of new plays with "The Franklin Thesis," which suggests that the Founding Father was the Anti-Christ. July 21-24 at 7. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-868-4444. Through Aug. 14.)

POWERHOUSE SEASON
The summer festival at Vassar—now in its twentieth year—presents a selection of new work, including "Nerds," a musical about Silicon Alley geek tycoons (written by the creators of "The Bomb-itty of Errors"), and "A Safe Harbor for Elizabeth Bishop," a play about the poet's life in Brazil. This week, Kathleen Chalfont stars in the première of Patricia Wettig's "My Andy," which presents Andy Warhol's story from the point of view of his mother. On the weekend, four works in progress get readings: "The Argument," by the journalist Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros; "Doubt," by John Patrick Shanley; "Fran's Bed," by James Lapine, read by Mia Farrow; and "Pen," by David Marshall Grant, read by Marcia Gay Harden. (Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 845-437-7235. Through Aug. 1. For full schedule, see powerhouse.vassar.edu.)

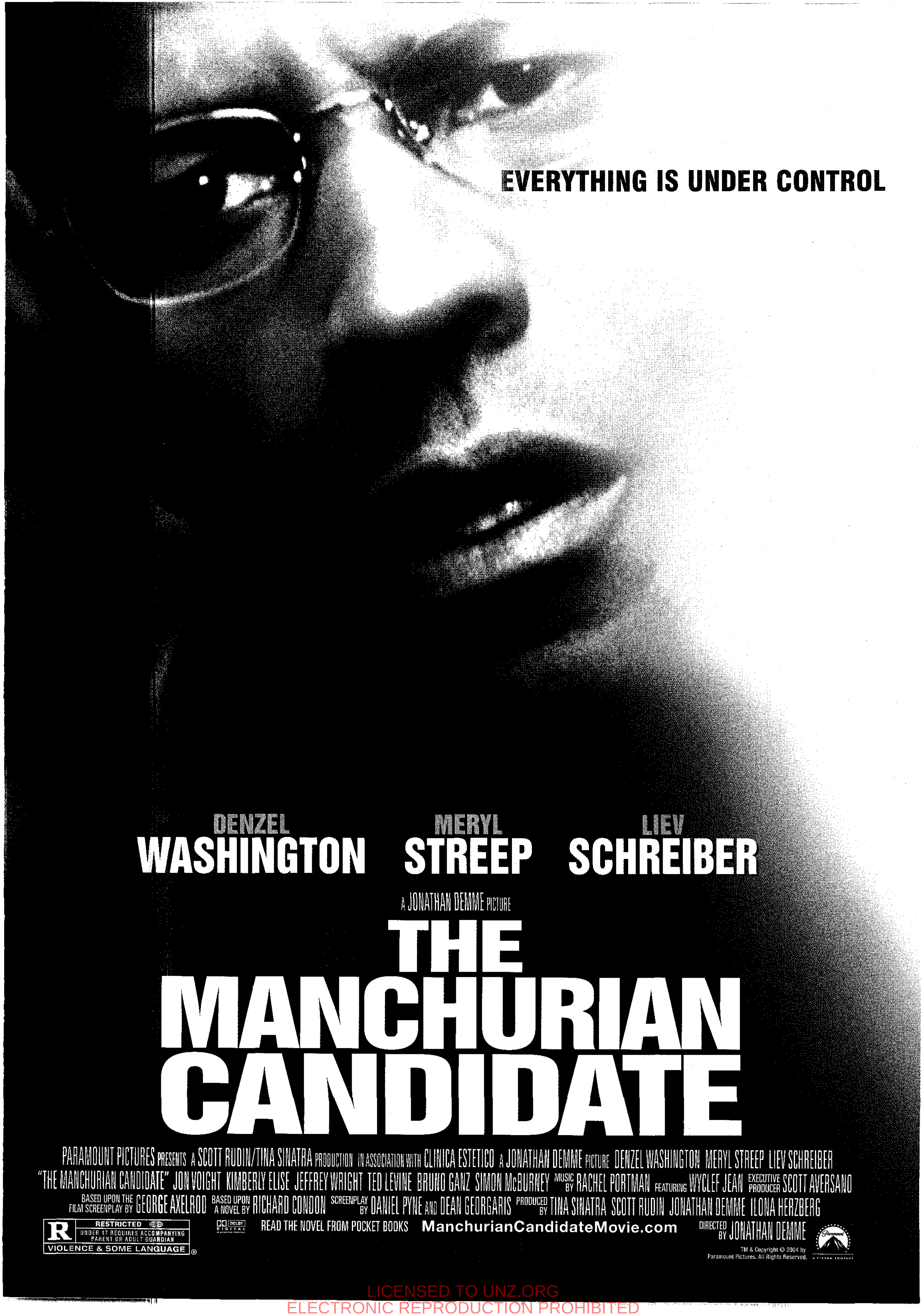
THE SUMMER FESTIVAL:
A MIRROR OF OSAKA
A Kabuki play in Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park (see This Week). July 20-21 and July 25 at 2 and 7, July 22-23 at 7, and July 24 at 2 and 8. (212-721-6500.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ADDRESS UNKNOWN
An epistolary play based on the novel by Kathrine Kressmann Taylor from 1939 that explores the friendship between a German Jewish art collector in San Francisco, Max Eisenstein (Jim Dale), and his business partner, Martin Schulse (William Atherton), who has returned to Germany. The play is well crafted, but the stiff staging constrains the performances; Max and Martin narrate their letters from opposite ends of a broad, oblong table, which is meant to indicate the ocean and the emotional gulf between them but also weakens their connection. Frank Dunlop directs. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

BOMBAY DREAMS
One of the silliest musicals in recent memory. In this British import, the "scum from the slum" Akaash (the hardworking Manu Narayan) gets discovered by a zaftig Bollywood diva, Rani (the hard-shaking Ayesha Dharker), and becomes a star. Over the course of nine production numbers, Akaash briefly forgets his roots, but not, unfortunately, the lyrics, by Don Black, including those of the show's hit song, "Shakalaka Baby," whose most eloquent passage goes, "Shakalaka baby shakalaka baby / Come and shakalaka with me." (Reviewed in our issue of 5/10/04.) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.)

BUG
As written by Tracy Letts and directed by Dexter Bullard, this play is never exactly what it seems. It



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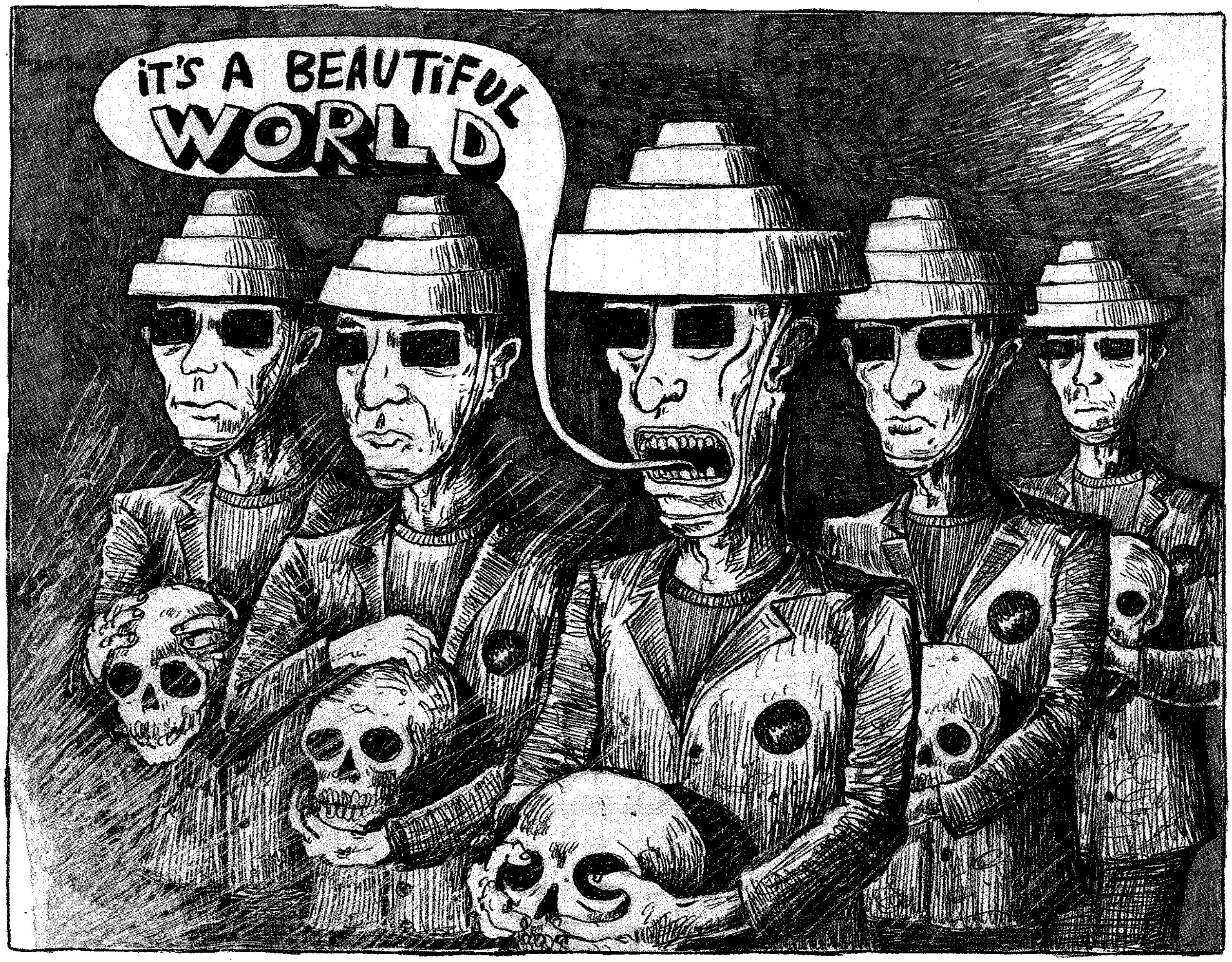

The New Wave heroes Devo play SummerStage on July 23 (see Night Life). Drawing by Wayne Coyne.

begins deceptively simply, in a residential hotel somewhere near Oklahoma City. Agnes White (the incomparable Shannon Cochran), who works as a bartender, stands at the door to her small, dingy room. Before long, a friend shows up with a little distraction—a guy named Peter Evans (Michael Shannon), who seems to want to hang out. Scenes of casual surrealism culminate, in the second half of the play, in acts of physical and emotional violence that do more than shock: they arouse both pity and despair. (5/17/04) (Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St., at Seventh Ave. 212-239-6200.)

MACBETH
The Classical Theatre of Harlem presents a four-week run of a revival of Alfred Preisser's staging of the play, starring Ty Jones as Macbeth. Directed by Preisser. (C.T.H. Courtyard Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave., near 141st St. 212-868-4444. Through Aug. 8.)

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING
Aquila Theatre Company presents a staged version of the Rudyard Kipling story, in a new adaptation by Peter Meineck, starring Louis Butelli, Richard Willis, and Anthony Cochrane. Directed by Robert Richmond. (Baruch Performing Arts Center, 25th St. between Lexington and Third Aves. 212-239-6200.)

MINT THEATRE COMPANY
Two short plays by J. M. Barrie are paired in a Mint Theatre production, directed by Eleanor Reissa. The first, "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals," stars Frances Sternhagen. The second, "The New Word," stars Richard Easton. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
David Esbjornson directs the play for the Public Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park series. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 212-539-8750.)

SIGHT UNSEEN
In a revival of Donald Margulies's subtle 1992 play at the Manhattan Theatre Club's Biltmore Theatre, under the impeccable direction of Dan Sullivan, Jonathan Waxman (Ben Shenkman), an American artist who is in England for a retrospective of his work, walks into a threadbare farmer's cottage in Norfolk to visit Patricia (Laura Linney), his former muse, and, in her words, "the sacrificial shiksa," whom he jilted fifteen years earlier. Shenkman and Linney play masterfully together; they make shifts of mood sparkle with nervy implication. (6/7/04) (261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. Closes July 25.)

WONDERFUL TOWN
The musical from 1953, about two spirited Ohio sisters' adventures in Greenwich Village, is a beautifully staged revival that gives us back a thrilling glimpse of the gaiety, wit, confidence, and craft of the American musical in its heyday. The show boasts a well-played, fizzy Leonard Bernstein score and a terrific set of Comden and Green lyrics that stop the show several times, with a special huzzah for "One Hundred Easy Ways (to Lose a Man)." The excellent cast is superbly directed and choreographed by Kathleen Marshall. (Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

ALSO PLAYING

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.

AVENUE Q
Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

THE BOY FROM OZ
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

BRIDGE AND TUNNEL
45 Bleecker Street Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.

CHICAGO
Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 212-239-6200.

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: SUMMER SHOCK!
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

FROZEN
Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200.

GOLDA'S BALCONY
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

HAIRSPRAY
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.

I AM MY OWN WIFE
Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. 212-563-5544.

MOVIN' OUT
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

WICKED
Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

DANCE

FLAMENCO VIVO CARLOTA SANTANA
Antonio Hidalgo's "Bailaor/Bailaora" traces the stylistic evolution of flamenco from the sixteenth

century to the present—along gender lines. First, the women in the troupe illustrate the female side of the tradition, with shawls, castanets, and dresses with long trains, and then the men show developments in the male side, including the introduction of arm work, once considered feminine. The modern section of the program, infused with foreign borrowings, provides a somewhat anticlimactic end to an otherwise strong evening. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. July 19-24 at 8.)

"BOCCATANGO"
Julio Bocca, a star of American Ballet Theatre, brings the smoldering energy of his Ballet Argentino to the Joyce in a program of tangos, both traditional and new, choreographed by Ana Maria Stekelman. Featuring the eight-piece orchestra Octango, playing works by Astor Piazzolla, Carlos Gardel, and others. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. July 26-27 at 8. Through Aug. 14.)

FOREVER TANGO
Luis Bravo's evening of Argentine dance played on Broadway for a year and has toured five continents. In honor of the show's tenth anniversary, the production comes to the Shubert for a six-week run, with fourteen dancers and an eleven-piece orchestra. (225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. July 20, July 22-23, and July 27 at 8; July 21 and July 24 at 2 and 8; and July 25 at 3. Through Aug. 29.)

"THIN LINE"
Derek Mitchell, an Off Broadway choreographer ("The Karaoke Show") and fashionista, presents a story dance, set on a recent New Year's Eve, that interweaves the lives of eight young New Yorkers. With music by Danielle Lindner. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. July 19-24 at 8.)

SOLAR SUMMER SERIES
Awilda Sterling presents the ensemble piece "Mujeres de Vida Alegre" (whose title is a Spanish euphemism for prostitutes), which is preceded by a solo dance by Jessie Flores that includes hip-hop and street moves. (Stuyvesant Cove Park, 23rd St. at the East River. No tickets necessary. July 25 at 5.)

INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL—NYC
Companies from Taiwan and Nigeria join some of the city's jazz, modern, ballet, tap, hip-hop, and musical-theatre artists. Highlights this week: "Dancing on a Dream," an evening of tap by the Henry Le Tang protégée Shea Sullivan, who performs July 25 at 3 and 6, and "Dance with Me," by the Broadway choreographer David Marquez, on July 26 at 8. (The Duke, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. For full schedule, see www.internationaldancefestival.org. Through Aug. 15.)

RACHEL THORNE GERMOND
A program of the choreographer's new and recent work. In the quartet "Velocity," dancers rush across the stage, dart forward and backward, and run in circles, accompanied by a frantic harpsichord concerto by Henryk Gorecki. The kitschy duet "Double Elvis"—inspired by the Warhol painting—presents two women in sideburns and Elvis getup, who gyrate in synch. A solo by Jaime Galindo is performed with a saw. Another, "Cast Away," features the Bessie-winning dancer Tasha Taylor. (WAX, 205 N. 7th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-599-7997. July 22-24 at 8.)

CCANDANCE
The choreographer Christian Canciani (who has danced with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane and with Elisa Monte's company, among others) and his Parisian troupe bring two new works to the Joyce SoHo: "Squel'être," a collaboration between Canciani and the opera singer Martine Midoux, who perform together, and "Le Calme, Reste," a quartet set to an original score by Eric Delbouys. (155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. July 22-25 at 8.)

"SUMMER PAVILION"
H. T. Chen & Dancers present their combination of modern dance and Chinese traditional dances in two weeks of performances at the Mulberry Street Theatre. (70 Mulberry St. 212-349-0126. July 22-25 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL
In the Ted Shawn Theatre, Gradimir Pankov directs Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in a program of contemporary European works: Jirí Kylián's arch "Six Dances," set to Mozart, in which oversize ball gowns roll about the stage; Nacho Duato's "Without Words," an ensemble piece set to Schubert; and an eerie duet by Mats Ek called "Solo for Two," in which a man and a woman pause, face each other, strip down to their bare skin, then put on each other's clothes. In the smaller Doris Duke Studio Theatre, the Lakshmi Vishwanathan Dancers and Musicians re-create the sacred gestures and sounds of India's bharatanatyam tradition. Les Grands Ballets Canadiens: July 21-23 at 8, July 24 at 2 and 8, and July 25 at 2. Lakshmi Vishwanathan: July 22-23 at 8:15, July 24 at 2:15 and 8:15, and July 25 at 5. (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

"JAZZ IN JULY"
The versatile pianist **Dick Hyman** is stepping down after twenty years as the artistic director of this summer concert series. He marks the occasion by bringing in a number of old friends. July 20 at 8: **Vince Giordano** and his Nighthawks, along with the clarinettists **Dan Levinson** and **Ken Peplowski** and others. July 21 at 8: The vocalist **Carrie Smith** leads a blues program. July 22 at 8: A tribute to Benny Carter. July 27 at 8: Hyman and the cornettist **Tom Pletcher** imagine Bix Beiderbecke interpreting the songs of George Gershwin. Also that evening, the singer **Carol Woods** puts a

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bluesy spin on Irving Berlin. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Through July 29.)

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE

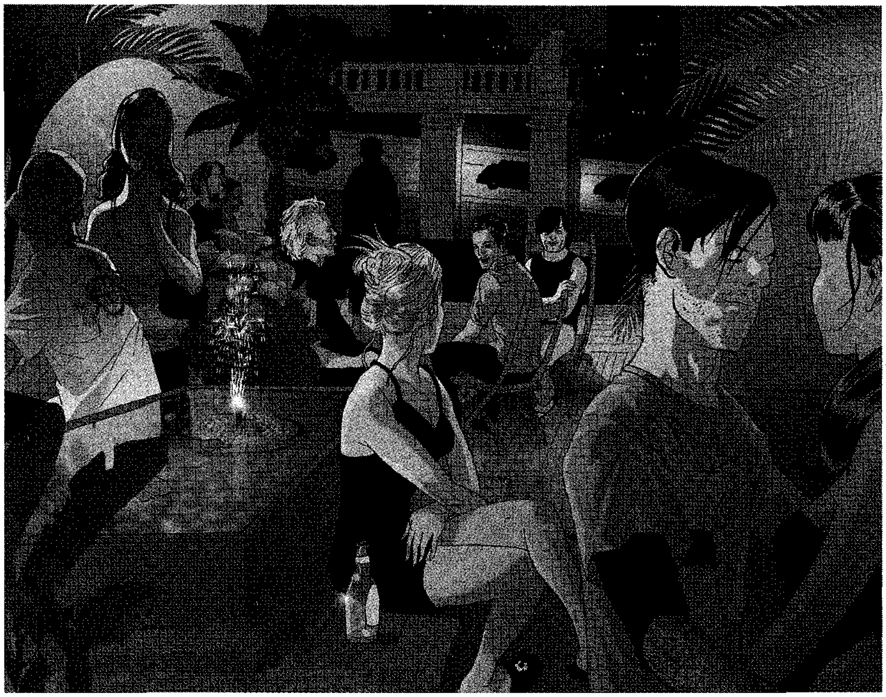
July 23 at 6: The New Wave pioneers **Devo** perform with two of the city's more celebrated young bands, the **Yeah Yeah Yeahs** and **Stellastarr***. Devo, an influential quintet of eccentric visionaries from Akron, is known to most people for the inescapable single "Whip It," from 1980. Resplendent in yellow radiation suits and shiny red energy domes (commonly mistaken for flowerpots), the group brought a distinctive visual aesthetic and philosophy to their edgy, experimental rock. Their career itself may have succumbed to devolution (they regroup only sporadically, often for corporate-sponsored events), but they've left an indelible stamp on contemporary music. July 25 at 3: **Ojos de Brujo** (see This Week). With **Si*Se** and **Alex Lora.** (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 212-360-2777.)

"CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!"

July 23 at 7:30: **Les Yeux Noirs** mix klezmer and Gypsy music. With **Mercan Dede,** a d.j. and producer from Turkey, by way of Montreal, who blends traditional Sufi rhythms and contemporary Western beats. He's here with a full band and dancers. July 24 at 7:30: **Jay Farrar,** formerly of Uncle Tupelo and Son Volt, continues his solo career with a new live album, "Stone, Steel & Bright Lights." With the singer-songwriter **Martha Wainwright.** (Prospect Park Band Shell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. 718-855-7882, ext. 45.)

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL

July 23-24 at 8:30: **DJ Spooky** presents "Rebirth of a Nation," a multimedia remix of D. W. Griffith's 1915 silent film, "Birth of a Nation." (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500.)



The roof deck of the Delancey, a new club with views of the Williamsburg Bridge.

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BARBÈS

376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—July 23: **Las Rubias del Norte** rearrange Latin big-band music for a handful of instruments, including the glockenspiel. They mix boleros, cha-cha-cha, and cumbias with lieder and cowboy songs. The whole thing is held together by the captivating vocals of the two lead singers, Emily Hurst and Allyssa Lamb, veterans of the New York Chorale Society (which explains the occasional Mozart composition).

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—July 23: The guitarist extraordinaire **Buckethead** (he wears a mask on his face and a Kentucky Fried Chicken bucket on his head) returns to his willfully bizarre solo career after a stint with the perpetually fluctuating Guns N' Roses.

THE DELANCEY

168 Delancey St. (212-254-9920)—This club, which recently appeared at the eastern end of Delancey Street, where Manhattan gives way to the East River and the Williamsburg Bridge rises toward Brooklyn, is conveniently located for its clientele—Lower East Side hipsters and aspiring rockers from the outer boroughs. The three-level space has a stage for bands in the basement (**Comets on Fire** and **Vietnam** are here on July 26) and a main floor with plush banquets and a d.j. booth (Björk spun records at a recent party), but the main attraction is a leafy roof garden, with a fountain and fish pool. Potted palms, climbing vines, and built-in wooden benches give the club a verdant, Los Angeles feel. The towering apartment building next door and the black-clad, tattoo-covered wait staff are nice New York touches.

IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—July 21-22: The **Hives** (see Pop Notes). July 23: San Diego's **Rocket from the Crypt** headlines a Battle of the Bands hosted by the radio show "Little Steven's Underground Garage." Nine bands from Long Island, Cleveland, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Miami, Philadelphia, Providence, and Boston joust for a coveted main-stage spot at the International Underground Garage Festival next month. May the best band win.

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—July 21: The local baroque-pop band **Flare** is led by LD Beghtol, a gentle giant of a singer. For this show, the only one in the city this year, Beghtol has rounded up nine other musicians and plans string-laden renditions of his back catalogue, along with new work, including a song about the artist Henry Darger. With the **Davenports.** July 22: The Woodstock veteran **Richie Havens.** July 25: **Les Yeux Noirs** (see "Celebrate Brooklyn!").

S.O.B.'S

204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (212-243-4940)—July 21: The lighthearted Haitian-born soul singer **St. Juste.** July 22: **Ojos de Brujo** (see This Week).

SOUTHPAW

125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—July 24: Twenty-five years ago, the **Kids** defied the notion that Tintin's orange quiff was the only punky thing to come out of Belgium. The gang of instrument-abusing hoods specialized in amateurish R. & B. that departed from the orthodox punk of the Damned and the Sex Pistols, but that was aggressive enough to make the cut. (The songs "Fascist Cops" and "Do You Love the Nazis?" helped.) Like many of their more celebrated British peers, the Kids re-formed in the late nineties; they are now visiting the States for the first time.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND

315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—July 21-24: The guitarist **John Abercrombie** leads a quartet featuring the violinist **Mark Feldman.**

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—July 22-25: **Eartha Kitt.** Halle Berry may be about to play Catwoman on the big screen, but the seventy-seven-year-old Kitt can outsing and outvamp any pretenders to the throne.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Through July 25: The **Archie Shepp/Roswell Rudd** quartet. The interaction between the saxophonist Shepp and the trombonist Rudd isn't quite as volatile as it was during the free-jazz heyday of the mid-sixties, but there's still more than enough bluster and grit to remind us of what we've been missing. The bassist **Reggie Workman** and the drummer **Andrew Cyrille,** two vets of the sixties trenches, provide genuine rhythmic tumble. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—July 21-25: **Jason Moran's** muse leads him where it will; the pianist employs tapes in live performances (still unique in jazz) and retools everything from Brahms to Afrika Bambaataa to "Body and Soul." His trio features the bassist **Tarus Mateen** and the drummer **Nasheet Waits** (on July 23-25 **Eric McPherson** takes over on the drums).

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through July 25: **Lewis Nash,** a drummer whose effortless rhythm making is infused with joy, has yet to meet an ensemble he couldn't enliven (and he's met a lot, having recorded more than two hundred CDs as a sideman). He leads a sleek quintet featuring the pianist **Renee Rosnes** and the vibist **Steve Nelson.** The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—**"Painters of Reality: The Legacy of Leonardo and Caravaggio in Lombardy"** is a mouthful of a title for a big, taste-changing show that tracks varieties of passionate naturalism from Leonardo through the birth of the Baroque. Half-familiar names—Luini, Moroni, Savoldo, Moretto—become unforgettable. The show achieves dramatic unity in its climax: the arrival of Caravaggio, whose realism fulfilled his precursors' dreams while revolutionizing pictorial aesthetics. His "Supper at Emmaus" (1601), on loan from the National Gallery in London, flabbergasts. In the show's coda, we meet the little-known Giacomo Ceruti (1698-1767), an astringent, intensely poetic observer of the poor. Through Aug. 15. ♦ **"Christo and Jeanne-Claude: The Gates, Central Park, New York."** Through July 25. ♦ **"Ruhlmann: Genius of Art Deco."** Through Sept. 5. ♦ **"August Sander: People of the Twentieth Century, a Photographic Portrait of Germany."** Through Sept. 19. ♦ **"Childe Hassam, American Impressionist."** Through Sept. 12. ♦ **"Dangerous Liaisons: Fashion and Furniture in the Eighteenth Century."** Through

TOMER HANUKA

Sept. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—**"Tall Buildings,"** a state-of-the-structure review of ambitious contemporary architecture, documents twenty-five skyscrapers around the world with photographs, models, diagrams, and blueprints. Through Sept. 27. ♦ Selections from the permanent collection are on display. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Constantin Brancusi: The Essence of Things."** The room of four "Bird" sculptures unfolds a staggering range of stylistic genius, from mythic poetry to Jazz Age elegance. Certain pieces are epiphanic. The all-pedestal "Caryatid" (1914 and 1926) remains radical for its union of art and furniture, and "Mlle. Pogany II" (1919) is a surprising, sublime sculpture from a dozen or so viewpoints. Through Sept. 19. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—**"Ana Mendieta: Earth Body Sculpture and Performance 1972-1985"** is a teeming retrospective of photographs, films, paintings, drawings, and objects from the brief career of the Cuban-born artist, who died in 1985, at the age of thirty-six. Espousing Body Art, the style of theatricalized narcissism that got Chris Burden shot in the arm, Mendieta used her own attractive form to make and receive painted marks and to undergo such improvised rituals as standing naked and being spattered with the blood of a freshly decapitated chicken. Outdoors, she dug holes, fashioned mounds, and built armatures—which were set afire—in the shapes of crude female figures. Her art's air of primitive fetish, myth, and mystery is pungent enough, but thin. Through Sept. 19. ♦ **"Cotton Puffs, Q-Tips, Smoke and Mirrors: The Drawings of Ed Ruscha"** and **"Ed Ruscha and Photography."** Through Sept. 26. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

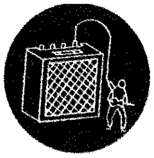
FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (212-217-5800)—The Institute's archives, usually available only to students and researchers, have been raided for **"The Artful Line: Drawings and Prints from FIT's Special Collections."** Nineteenth-century fashion magazines, tailors' instruction books, and salesmen's sample books are laid out with sketches and finished drawings culled from a collection of more than a hundred thousand original works. There are costume ideas by Delaunay, oral histories from Judith Leiber and Geoffrey Beene, and a few great dresses. Through July 31. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO
Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-831-7272)—**"MOMA at El Museo"** distills from the collections of the Museum of Modern Art a parallel Latin-American history of Mexican muralists, Caribbean Surrealists, Venezuelan geometricians, and Brazilian Conceptualists. Through July 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"New Worlds: German and Austrian Art, 1890-1940,"** the exhibition that inaugurated the Neue Galerie in 2001, is back on view. It's still an embarrassment of modernist riches, with paintings and drawings by Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka, Grosz, and Dix, Kurt Schwitters' "Merz" assemblages, vitrines filled with exquisite design objects, and Max Beckmann's "Self-Portrait with Horn" (1938). Now, however, the exhibition includes an early, pre-abstract Kandinsky painting of a street in Murnau, Kirchner's Expressionist "Franzi with Bow and Arrow," a mixed-media Paul Klee, and Felix Nussbaum's stark, disturbing "Self-Portrait in the Camp" (1940). There's also a greater representation of women, from Bauhaus collagists like Lilly Reich and Marianne Brandt to the Fauve-inspired painter Gabriele Münter. Through Sept. 13. (Open Fridays, 11 to 9, and Saturdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"Hard Light,"** which examines "lightscapes, nightscapes, new places, no places and lost time," is centered around a multiscreen video installation by Doug Aitken. His spare yet grandiloquent meditation on urban anomie is buttressed by other works emitting a similarly melancholy glare: photographs of airports by Fischli/Weiss, a glowing sculpture by Carsten Höller suggesting a Neo-Geo gas-station sign, and Bruce Nauman's "Green Light Corridor," in which the viewer squeezes through a claustrophobic, fluorescently lit passageway. The all-male roster includes works by Chris Marker, Ugo Rondinone, Ed Ruscha, and Lawrence Weiner. Through Sept. 4. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

POP NOTES



SWEDE SMELL OF SUCCESS
The Hives' new record, **Tyrannosaurus Hives** (Interscope), kicks off with the ninety-second-long "Abra Cadaver," an anti-wage-slave anthem that is louder and faster than anything on their 2000 album, "Veni Vidi Vicious." At first, it sounds like the Swedish band has returned to the atavistic, adrenalized punk of its début record, "Barely Legal," but the rest of the album suggests otherwise.

"Tyrannosaurus Hives" finds the Hives' sound intact—there are the same bright guitars and sharp pop hooks, not to mention the hyperactive vocals of the brash front man, Howlin' Pelle Almqvist—but it is more painterly than its predecessors, with a broader palette. "B Is for Brutus" rides along on a twangy surf-style guitar part. "Love in Plaster," plaintive and arid, splits the difference between punk and New Wave. "A Little More for Little You" has herky-jerky verses and a soaring shout-along chorus that is the sunniest thing the Hives have ever recorded. And "Diabolic Scheme" finds Almqvist delivering an unhinged monologue over moody strings that seem like they were borrowed from a horror movie; the song even includes a full-length guitar solo.

The Hives can still fire off a ruthlessly efficient garage-rock shot. "Walk Idiot Walk," the first single, has a blinding central riff orbited by spiralling guitar fills; "Two-Timing Touch and Broken Bones" nicks its riff from the Boyce/Hart classic "(I'm Not Your) Stepping Stone" to great effect; and "Dead Quote Olympics" is a hilarious swipe at unoriginal thinking ("that moment that you live for / it doesn't live for you") that doubles as a loving Ramones homage. The twelve songs on the record go by in thirty minutes, as if it were still 1966.

—Ben Greenman

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Summer-hours warning: many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.

DEXTER DALWOOD
Dalwood's large-scale canvases, which were standouts in the "Neurotic Realism" show at London's Saatchi Gallery in 1999, crackle with edgy, free-associative energy. "Bay of Pigs" features upside-down images from Picasso's (rather than Manet's) "Déjeuner sur l'Herbe," while "Diana Vreeland" is a big red boudoir that mimics Matisse's "Red Studio." Dalwood mixes pop culture, art history, and politics, forcing disparate aesthetics into uneasy alliances. Through July 30. (Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111.)

JONAH FREEMAN
A fifty-six-minute film introduces viewers to the world of the Franklin Abraham, a two-hundred-year-old rococo residence, "two miles long and, in places, over 150 stories high," that houses two million people. Apocryphal citations name Maxwell Blum, "an eccentric industrial horticulturalist," as its founder. Inhabitants range from the bored rich in the upper stories to a basement-dwelling anarchist. Posters and sculptures advertise some of the brands manufactured and consumed inside the building. LaVista soft drinks are represented by a plastic two-liter bottle with red liquid bubbling up out of it, and blowing electric fans from CoreGuy Air Circulation fill a narrow corridor with wind and noise. Through Aug. 13. (Kreps, 516A W. 20th St. 212-741-8849.)

CARRIE WALKER
Portraits of North American birds, bats, and rodents drawn in ink on brown rag paper. Walker isolates the heads and omits the captions of the field guides, breeding manuals, and scientific texts from which the images were culled. What we get instead are fragments, busts of the Rothschild's starling, bantam chickens, the yellow-breasted chat, young Richard's ground squirrels, and the lesser tube-nosed fruit bat. The drawings are reminiscent of pages from a Leonardo folio or a Rembrandt sketchbook. Walker centers her subjects so they seem to emerge without warning in the middle of the page, their sharp beaks, alert eyes, and quivering whiskers commanding the negative space around them. Through July 30. (ZieherSmith, 531 W. 25th St. 212-229-1088.)

"HAPPY ART FOR A SAD WORLD"
Summer group shows are the art-world equivalent of beach novels, and "Happy Art" is, accordingly, overheated, crowded, and a little light. Still, there are some genuinely happy-making things, like Chris Natrop's large cut-paper mobiles, which cast lacy shadows on a blue painted wall, and Julian Stark's revisitation of Herculean labors (Augean stables = litter collection along the highway). Pamela Hadfield drapes furniture and a cuckoo clock in swathes of fondant icing, and Edgar Orlaineta studs translucent white trash bags with colored plastic bottle caps to make handsome, ghostly hanging sculptures. Through Aug. 7. (Spike, 547 W. 20th St. 212-627-4100.)

Short List

ANA MENDIETA
Lelong, 528 W. 26th St.
212-315-0470. Through July 30.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

FELIX GMELIN
Low-impact political art perfectly suited for a confused political moment. "Flatbed, the Blue Curtain" is a video of artists reproducing Picasso's "Guernica," a tapestry version of which was covered with a blue curtain when Colin Powell spoke at the United Nations about the war in Iraq last year. "Two Films Exchanging Soundtracks" swaps sound from a Chinese propaganda film with a nineteen-sixties movie promoting the liberating effects of drug use, making dogma of all types look absurd. "Farbtest, die Rote Fahne II" juxtaposes a 1968 film of young people running through the streets of Berlin with a red flag—a protest in which Gmelin's father participated—with a contemporary restaging. Each version registers as both urgent and bewilderingly vague. Through July 31. (Maccarone, 45 Canal St. 212-431-4977.)

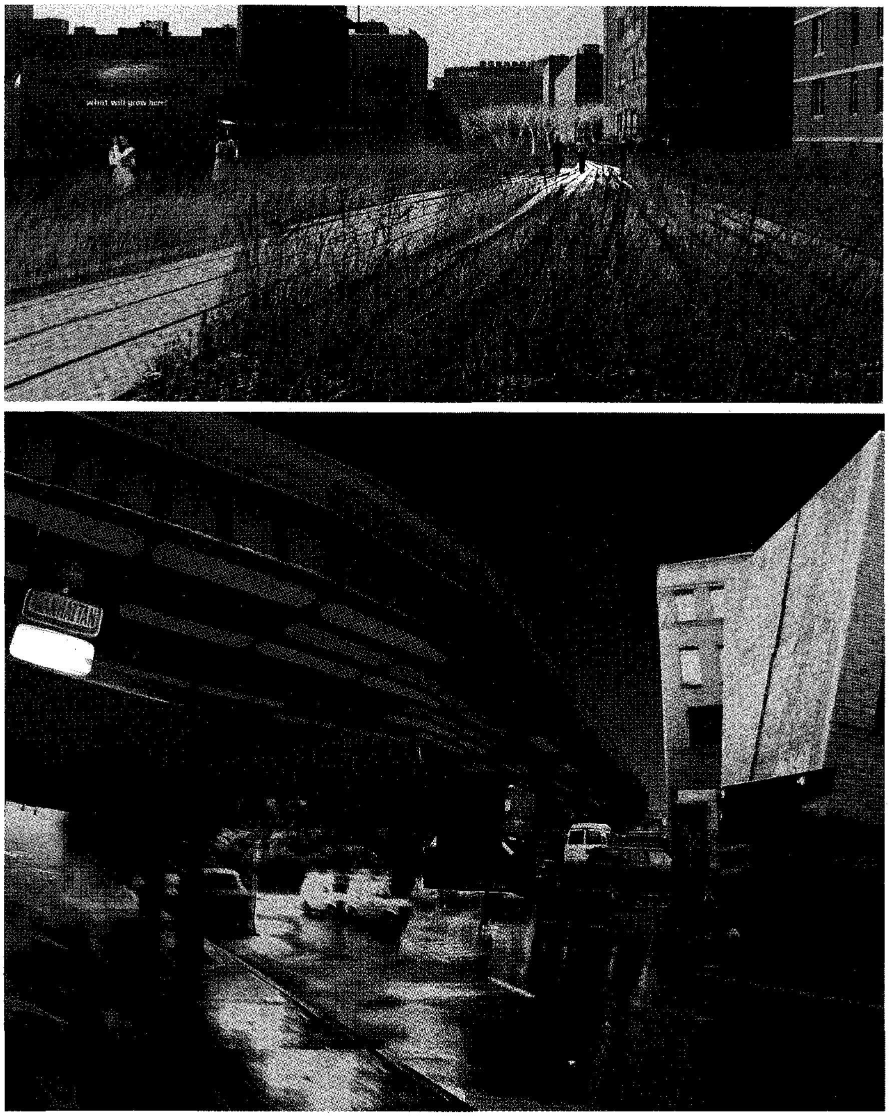
ANDY WARHOL
If you think you've seen it all, you probably have: these portraits of Mick Jagger, collaborations with Basquiat, and aimless film and video of the Factory all look familiar. But Warhol thought he had seen it all, too—the mystery is how (or, for the cynical, whether) he continued to see it as new. In tribute to the obsessive collecting and archiving that fed his enthusiasms, this selection from the Warhol Museum includes both a cache of metal dental molds arranged in an abstract starburst pattern, like ashtrays dentatae, and a small archive of correspondence from Valerie Solanas and Edie Sedgwick. Through July 30. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 212-226-3232.)

Short List

ROBERT RYMAN
Peter Blum, 99 Wooster St.
212-343-0441. Through Sept. 25.
"4 TEAMS 4 VISIONS: DESIGN APPROACHES TO THE HIGH LINE MASTER PLAN"
Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Pl., at Bleecker St. 212-683-0023. Through Aug. 14.

PHOTOGRAPHY

LARRY FINK
Vintage black-and-white prints from Fink's "Social Graces" series, which was shown at the Museum of Modern Art in 1979 and secured Fink's reputation as a master of social-documentary photography. The pictures portray New York gallery openings, balls, and late nights at Studio 54 juxtaposed with birthday and graduation parties and an American Legion dance in rural Pennsylvania. Through July 23. (Edwynn Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-688-4848.) In another show, impersonators of current American politicians cavort in Weimar-style tableaux. Through Sept. 4. (Powerhouse, 68 Charlton St. 212-614-9074.)



HIGH CONCEPT *The High Line, 1.45 miles of elevated railway that runs south from West Thirty-fourth Street, has been languishing in rusty disrepair since 1980. The nonprofit Friends of the High Line wants to rehabilitate it as a park and is now showing four possible plans at the Center for Architecture, including ideas from Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro (top) and Stephen Holl Architects (bottom).*

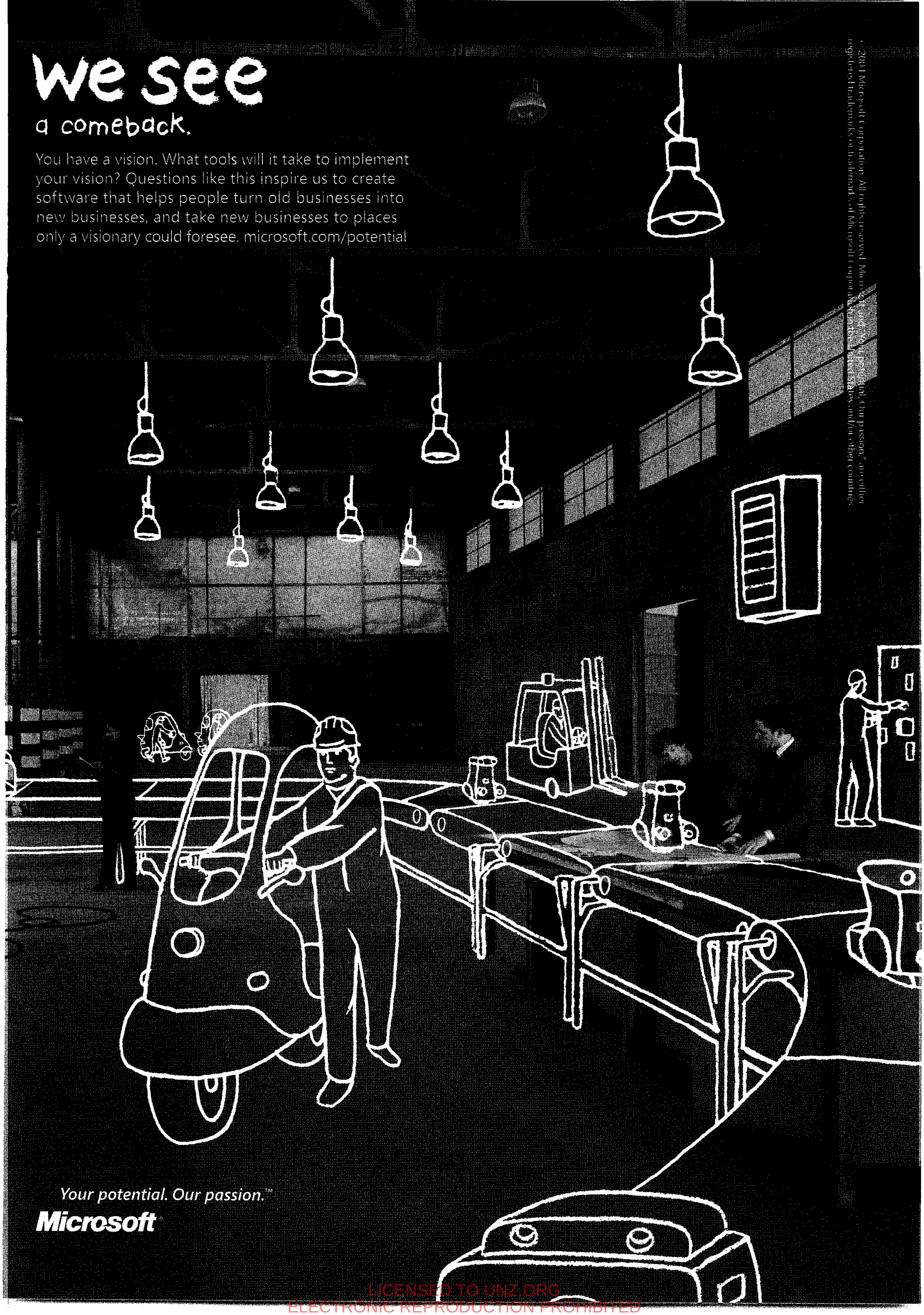
CHRIS HOOPER
Using a large-format view camera, Hooper takes extraordinarily detailed photographs of the interaction between water and light along the Pacific Ocean. In some pictures the waves roil and fog blocks out the sun, creating a virtually unified field of gray. In others, the sun on still water makes a block of light that falls in a hard line into the ocean. Through Sept. 18. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 212-989-7600.)
JOSHUA LUTZ
In his first solo show, Lutz takes the "New Topographics" of Adams, Shore, and Sternfeld into the current era of urban sprawl. In one picture, mountains in the distance are squeezed out of view by the minarets, domes, and neon camels of Las Vegas's Sahara Casino. Crossed wires, scraggly trees, and a sad swing set add to the claustrophobia of a small-town Pennsylvania subdivision. Some wide-open spaces are included—an abandoned palm-tree farm in California, a huge, bizarrely fenced-in cement foundation in Westchester County—but the extra room to roam is presented with a relentless lack of sentimentality. Through Aug. 7. (Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868.)
EZRA STOLLER
A small show (eleven black-and-white prints) of work by the master photographer of modernist architecture. Stoller, who was trained as an architect, began photographing buildings in the thirties. The pictures here, which were taken between 1949 and 1977, include dramatic, stark views of Eero Saarinen's T.W.A. Terminal, at JFK, Mies van der Rohe's buildings at the Illinois Institute of Technology, in Chicago, Frank Lloyd Wright's Johnson Wax Tower, in Racine, and Louis Kahn's Salk Institute, in La Jolla. Stoller emphasizes pure shapes. There are just a few people in the pictures, and sometimes a strategically placed car. The buildings look the way the architects meant them to. Through July 30. (Henry Urbach Architecture, 526 W. 26th St. 212-627-0974.)
INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY / ASIA SOCIETY
A show of recent photography and videos from China, "Between Past and Future," fills both museums with a hundred and thirty works by sixty young artists. The incredibly fast transformation of Chinese society is the central theme. Riffing on traditional Chinese scroll painting, Wang Qingsong places an officially denounced art critic at the center of his updating of the "Night Revels of Lao Li," from the tenth century. Wang Wei backlights a long line of color transparencies placed on the floor, portraits of himself underwater, forcing the viewer to walk across his face. Liu Zheng's black-and-white portraits of women mourning at a country funeral and masked revellers at a New Year's Eve party elegantly evoke the stark contrasts in the new China. Sze Tsung Leong's large color prints showing demolished traditional architecture are sad reflections on the country's manic race to build. Through Sept. 4. (International Center of Photography, 1133 Sixth Ave. 212-857-0000; Asia Society, 725 Park Ave. 212-288-6400.)
"SIX FROM THE SEVENTIES"
More than fifty prints by six photographers whose work exemplifies many of the key artistic ideas of the nineteen-seventies. A large print on vinyl from 1977 by Bea Nettles merges oddly colored images of dinnerware and the moon with her own body, beating the postmodernists to the punch. Joel Meyerowitz's Manhattan street scenes—made with the early color dye-transfer process—combine Harry Callahan's city compositions with Philip-Lorca diCorcia's urban anomie. Frank Gohlke's tiny buildings and Michael Bishop's painted cinder blocks and billboards will speak to fans of Todd Hido and James Welling, while Michael Martone's autobiographical studies will be liked by admirers of Nan Goldin. William Larson's spare, even undercooked prints made on an early fax-like machine anticipate today's digital collages. Through July 31. (Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010.)

Short List

RUVEN AFANADOR
Throckmorton, 145 E. 57th St. 212-223-1059.
Through July 31.
WEEGEE
Ubu Gallery, 416 E. 59th St. 212-753-4444.
Through July 23.

CLASSICAL MUSIC
CONCERTS IN TOWN

INTERNATIONAL KEYBOARD INSTITUTE AND FESTIVAL
July 21: Peter Frankl offers a concert of Mozart, Schubert (the Sonata in C Minor), Schumann (the "Waldszenen," Op. 82), and Chopin. ♦ July 22: The exquisitely calibrated styles of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau have so dominated our aural memory of the lieder recital that we forget about the possibility of a bolder, more operatic approach—which will be taken at this performance of "Winterreise," with the tenor Jon Fredric West (the Met's robust Siegfried), accompanied by Rose. ♦ July 23: Michael Oelbaum plays the last three Beethoven sonatas. ♦ July 24: An evening with the Beaux Arts Trio features Schubert's Notturno for Piano Trio, Debussy's "Estampes," for solo piano, and Beethoven's Sonata for Cello and Piano in A Major, Op. 69. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 212-580-0210, ext. 336. All concerts begin at 8.)



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BARGEMUSIC
The violinist Harumi Rhodes, the violist Kyle Armbrust, and the pianist Steven Beck, with friends, are in residence for an all-French weekend. July 22-23 at 7:30: Saint-Saëns's jolly Septet in E-Flat Major ends a program including works by Rameau, Debussy (Book I of the Études for piano), and Messiaen. ♦ July 24 at 7:30 and July 25 at 4: More Debussy, plus music by Leclair and Fauré (the Piano Quartet No. 2 in G Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL
July 22-24 at 8:30: Nicholas Brooke's opera "Tone Test," a co-production with American Opera Projects, features Greg Purnhagen and Dina Emerson (see This Week). (Clark Studio Theatre, Rose Building, 7th fl.) ♦ July 24 at 10:30: John Tavener, the deeply religious English cult composer, will demand the most of his local followers in "The Veil of the Temple," an all-night vigil originally created for the soprano Patricia Rozario and the choir of London's Temple Church. The church's music director, Stephen Layton, conducts the Temple choir (beefed up by members of the Dessoff Choirs), Rozario, a twelve-member-strong brass-and-percussion band, and a collection of players on Eastern instruments (including Kirk Campbell, a virtuoso of the *duduk*, the ancient Armenian oboe) in the North American première of the piece. (Avery Fisher Hall. The performance, which will last approximately seven hours, will be followed by breakfast on Josie Robertson Plaza.) (212-721-6500.)

OUT OF TOWN

TANGLEWOOD
July 21 at 8:30: The Emerson String Quartet bring their flawless technique to works by two great friends, Britten (the Quartet No. 2 in C Major) and Shostakovich (the Quartet No. 9 in E-Flat Major), along with a newer work by a friend of theirs (Joan Tower's "Incandescent"). ♦ July 23 at 8:30: Hans Graf conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra in an all-Dvořák program: the "Othello" Overture, the Cello Concerto (with Claudio Bohórquez), and the Seventh Symphony. ♦ July 24 at 8:30: Renée Fleming, backed by the B.S.O., romances the crowd with a signature program of arias and songs by Mozart, Strauss, Massenet, Puccini, Rodgers, and Porter; Patrick Summers is her music director. ♦ July 25 at 2:30: Mark Elder conducts music by Vaughan Williams, Debussy ("Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune"), Elgar, and Stravinsky (the Concerto for Piano and Winds, with Peter Serkin). ♦ July 27 at 8:30: An evening with the pianist Richard Goode. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

NEWPORT MUSIC FESTIVAL
Some highlights from the festival's final week. July 21 at 9: The violinist Dmitry Sitkovetsky, one of the festival's star performers, offers a gala evening at Rosecliff of works by Bach, Beethoven (the "Kreutzer" Sonata), Bartók, and Prokofiev with the pianist John Lenehan. ♦ July 25 at 3: "Vieille Vienne," the closing gala concert at the Breakers, features not only music by Schubert, Lehár, and Johann Strauss II but a reception arranged by Vienna's Sacher Hotel. (Newport, R.I. 401-849-0700.)

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL
July 22 at 7:30: The young Daedalus Quartet offers a new piece by David Horne along with masterworks by Haydn and Beethoven (the "Harp" Quartet, Op. 74). ♦ July 23 at 8: The world knows little now of Francesco Conti, but in Handel's day he was Vienna's leading composer of Italian opera. Bel Canto at Caramoor's latest production is a Conti piece with a Spanish theme: **"Don Quixote in Sierra Morena,"** based on one of the more madcap episodes of the Cervantes novel. Juan Carlos Rivas conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's and a cast headed by the tenor Stephen Tharp and the baritone Dennis Blackwell. ♦ July 24 at 8: Michael Barrett, the festival's new general director, shows off his conducting skills in a program of "First Symphonies"—by Beethoven, Shostakovich, and Bernstein—with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the mezzo-soprano Adriana Zabala. (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

TABLES FOR TWO

BLUE HILL AT STONE BARNS
630 Bedford Rd., Pocantico Hills, N.Y. (914-366-9600)—The news, this spring, of the opening of Daniel and David Barber's co-venture with David Rockefeller in organic farming and dining was of sufficient promise to send normally immobile New Yorkers hitching rides to the ominously quiet and leafy wilderness of Westchester. The project, eight years in the making, involved reclaiming the mossy Stone Barns on the Rockefeller estate in Pocantico Hills (where an earlier generation of Rockefellers grew up, drinking milk from their own dairy) as an organic husbandry center, complete with a restaurant and one of the largest in-ground, organic-soil greenhouses on the East Coast, creating a single, mostly self-sustaining farming and dining experience—a realization of the new American cook's dream of a purely seasonal and truly local cooking, equal parts Petit Trianon and Chez Panisse.

The food is a delicious and unpretentious mix of French and American so, well, organically combined that it seems less like fusion than fission cooking—an explosive and happily outward style, without any fussy brooding on bilingual equations or crossovers. (And—very unFrenchly—unpolluted by cream or butter.) Dan Barber and Michael Anthony, the executive chef, are unafraid to repeat a single ingredient: in asparagus season they might offer asparagus wrapped in pancetta, frothy asparagus soup, and local veal with more asparagus and finish with a rhubarb compote with its own mint ice cream. (Showier cooks would have put asparagus in the ice cream, too.)

Though this is as good as the new American restaurant cooking gets, the beautiful rusticity of the project and the environment is not yet decisively represented on the plate. Hardened New Yorkers dream of whole roasted pigs and shared soups, of udder-fresh cheeses and bowls of fruit—of a cooking that will not merely be farm based but will express the idea of the farm. This is, of course, a dream that is not easy to square with the necessities of an expensive restaurant in a rich and sophisticated New York suburb. But a contented diner, backstroking his way home down the Hudson, can be forgiven for thinking that Barber and Anthony could plant themselves still deeper in the soil to see what they might yet harvest. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays for dinner and Sundays for brunch and dinner. Entrées $46-$66.)

—*Adam Gopnik*

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA
July 22 at 8: Gilbert and Sullivan's **"Patience,"** with a cast that includes Sarah Coburn, Jeffrey Lentz, Kevin Burdette, and Joyce Castle; Andrew Bisantz conducts. ♦ July 23 at 8: Handel's **"Imeneo,"** with John Tessier, Michael Maniaci, Amanda Pabyan, and Craig Phillips; William Lacey. ♦ July 24 at 8 and July 26 at 2: A new production of Richard Rodney Bennett's **"The Mines of Sulphur,"** with Caroline Worra, Beth Clayton, Brandon Jovanovich, and James Maddalena; Stewart Robertson. ♦ July 25 at 2: Long derided as kitsch because of its California Gold Rush milieu (Webern knew better), **"La Fanciulla del West"** is in fact the noblest of Puccini's operas, a work that speaks eloquently to the potential of ordinary people. Minnie—half barmaid, half Valkyrie—is the composer's most self-reliant heroine: she not only gets her man but rides off with him at the end. Emily Pulley, with a touch of Callas-style *squillo* in her tone, commands the role in a manner that is both measured and fierce; her outlaw suitor, Dick Johnson, is sung with commitment by Roger Honeywell, a florid young tenor with an acting background. The conductor, Stewart Robertson, a fastidious Scotsman, leaves the passion up to Puccini, carefully tending to the score's complex orchestration and lyric flow. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

BARD SUMMERSCAPE: "ST. PETERSBURG LEGACY"
The pianist Sarah Rothenberg presents a concert devoted to the work of several luminaries of mid-twentieth-century Russia, including Prokofiev's and Shostakovich's songs set to the poetry of Ahkmatova and Tsvetayeva and Galina Ustvolskya's Piano Sonata No. 2; she will be joined by the mezzo-soprano Katherine Ciesinski, the actor Tony Torn, and others. (Fisher Center, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7900. July 24 at 2 and July 25 at 6.)

BANG ON A CAN SUMMER INSTITUTE MARATHON
Terry Riley is the special guest for a six-hour marathon of classical, jazz, and gamelan music performed by Riley, members of the summer faculty (including the cellist Wendy Sutter and the violinist Todd Reynolds), and their students. (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, Mass. 413-662-2111. July 24 at 4.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS
July 24 at 8: Scott Dunn offers modernist works by Starer and Ives (the "Concord Sonata"), followed by the more relaxed sounds of Rorem (the gently indulgent Piano Sonata No. 2, a Cointreau-scented reverie from the young composer's Paris years) and Debussy. ♦ July 25 at 3: An afternoon with the St. Lawrence String Quartet features music by Haydn, Shostakovich (the Quartet No. 8 in C Minor), and Dvořák. (Woodstock, N.Y. For more information, call 845-679-8217.)

MUSIC FESTIVAL OF THE HAMPTONS
The Emerson String Quartet plays quartets by Janáček (the passionate Quartet No. 2, "Intimate Pages") and Debussy, along with a fugue by Mendelssohn. (Snake Hollow Rd., Bridgehampton, N.Y. 800-644-4418. July 24 at 8. For a full schedule, see www.musicfestivalofthehamptons.com.)

THE WEEKEND OF CHAMBER MUSIC
This quiet series, headed by the flutist Judith Pearce, comes to a close with a star turn from the mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, who sings Respighi's "Il Tramonto" on a program that also includes works by Foote, Maxwell Davies, and Brahms (the String Quintet in G Major). (Presbyterian Church, Hortonville, N.Y. 845-932-8414. July 24 at 8.)

MARLBORO MUSIC FESTIVAL
The Northeast's shrine for lovers of German chamber music, performed by some of the world's leading musicians (and their very talented students). (Marlboro, Vt. July 24 at 8:30 and July 25 at 2:30. For more information, see www.marlboromusic.org.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN
July 25 at 3: Singapore's Tang Quartet teams up with the pianist Solungga Liu for music by Haydn, Dvořák, and Schumann (the Piano Quintet). (Routes 63 and 126, Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS
July 21 at 7: James P. Blaylock and Steven Popkes read from their science fiction. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ July 27 at 7: James Marcus, a former editor at Amazon.com, reads from his new book, "Amazonia: Five Years at the Epicenter of the Dot.com Juggernaut." (Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS
July 21 at 7: Lee Stringer, the author of a memoir about crack addiction called "Grand Central Winter," talks with Kurt Vonnegut about his latest autobiographical tale, "Sleepaway School: Stories from a Boy's Life." (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.) ♦ July 23 at 7:30: George McGovern, the 1972 Democratic candidate for President, talks about "The Essential American," his new defense of liberalism. (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 82nd St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ July 23: Following the 8 P.M. screening of "La Dolce Vita," the dancer and choreographer Sondra Lee recalls her role as a ballerina in the orgy scene in Federico Fellini's 1960 classic. (Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. 212-727-8110.)

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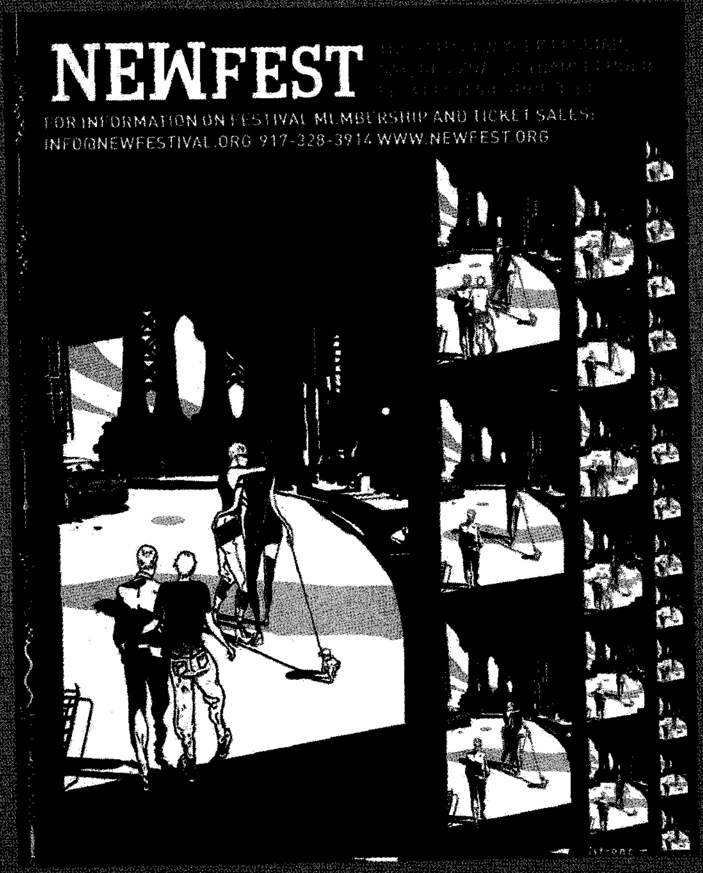
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MOVIES OPENING

THE BLIND SWORDSMAN: ZATOICHI
Takeshi Kitano directed and stars in this martial-arts epic, in which he plays a sightless samurai warrior. In Japanese. Opening July 23.

THE BOURNE SUPREMACY
Matt Damon returns as the assassin Jason Bourne, in an espionage thriller directed by Paul Greengrass. With Franka Potente, Julia Stiles, and Joan Allen. Opening July 23.

CATWOMAN
A superhero movie set in the beauty industry, with Halle Berry as a shy graphic designer who attains the strength and agility of a cat. Also with Sharon Stone and Benjamin Bratt. Directed by Pitof. Opening July 23.

FREE RADICALS
Barbara Albert's drama about the lone survivor of a plane crash (Kathrin Resetaritis) who is dealt another cruel twist of fate. In German. Opening July 23. (Anthology Film Archives.)

A HOME AT THE END OF THE WORLD
Michael Cunningham adapted his own novel about two childhood friends from Cleveland (Colin Farrell and Dallas Roberts) who reunite in New York City. With Sissy Spacek and Robin Wright-Penn. Directed by Michael Mayer. Opening July 23.

HOWARD ZINN: YOU CAN'T BE NEUTRAL ON A MOVING TRAIN
A documentary about the activist and historian, directed by Deb Ellis and Denis Mueller. Narrated by Matt Damon. Opening July 23. (Cinema Village.)

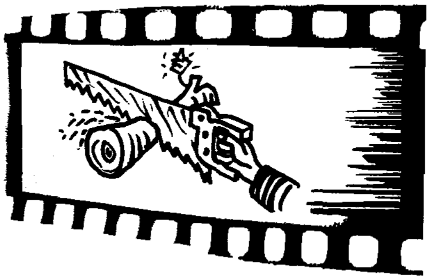
JUON: THE GRUDGE
Takashi Shimizu wrote and directed this horror film about a powerful and deadly curse. In Japanese. Opening July 23.

NOLA
A drama in which a young singer from Kansas (Emmy Rossum) comes to New York City in search of her biological father. Written and directed by Alan Hruska. Opening July 23. (New York Twin.)

ORWELL ROLLS IN HIS GRAVE
Robert Kane Pappas's documentary about free speech and media conglomerates. Opening July 23. (Angelika Film Center.)

FILM NOTES

ANCHORMAN: THE LEGEND OF RON BURGUNDY
Will Ferrell as a seventies-era schmuck—a local-news anchorman with a mustache thick enough to scale a fish. There are a few laughs, and one beautiful prolonged gag at the end involving rival local-news teams. But Ferrell and his old "Saturday Night Live" buddy Adam McKay (who directed) don't seem to have the shape of a movie—any movie—in their bones or even in their hopes. In a typical scene, someone shouts and does something strange, then McKay cuts to someone else shouting and doing something strange, then back to the first guy, then the scene is over. Ferrell does the regular-guy bellow, the nod-and-wink chumminess, the manly stare, the blank-brained self-confidence, but even a schmuck has to have a soul if he's going to be the center of a two-hour movie. Ferrell is a buffoon, but he's not an actor—at least not yet.—*David Denby* (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

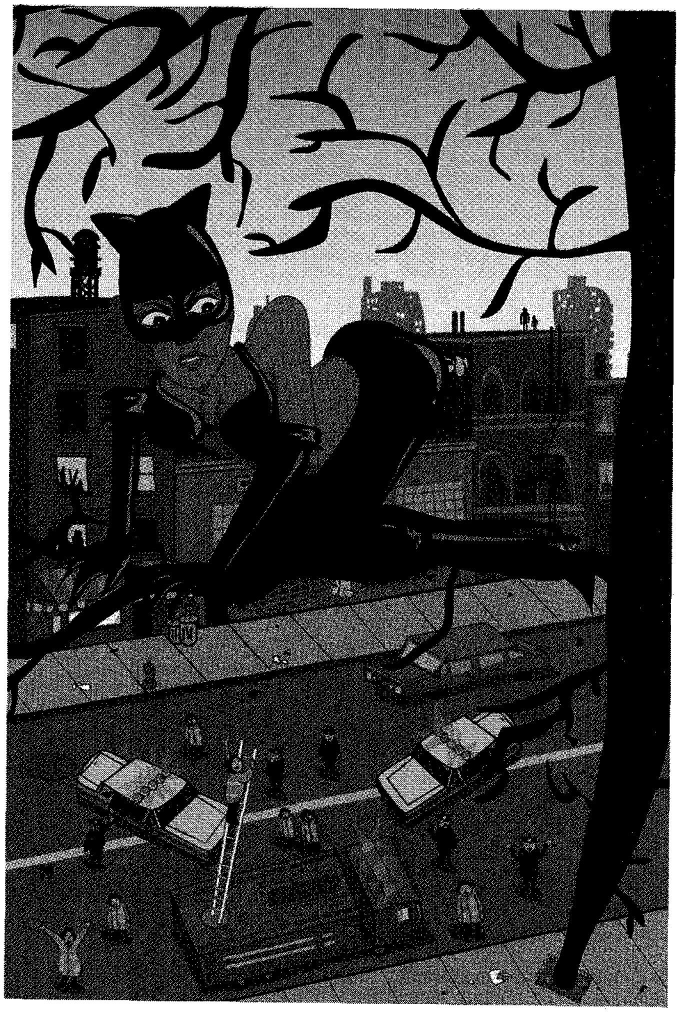


BEFORE SUNSET
A lovely sequel to "Before Sunrise," the charmingly diminutive romantic movie that Richard Linklater made in 1995, in which Jesse (Ethan Hawke), a footloose young American, and Celine (Julie Delpy), a French student, spent a night together in Vienna. Nine years have gone by, and Jesse, now a novelist, is hawking a book in Paris, where he runs into Celine, who has become an earnest international health worker. Jesse is supposed to fly home later that day, but they agree to walk around the Left Bank. Like the earlier movie, "Before Sunset" turns into an orgy of talk—flirtatious, soulful, boastful, self-deprecating talk, some of it borderline pretentious but all of it utterly convincing as the intelligent and foolish things said by people who connect through their tastes, ideas, and passions. The drama emerges from the movie's form: it plays in real time, and for about eighty minutes, as Linklater's camera gravely follows these two around, we wonder whether Jesse will go home to his wife and child or allow himself to be fascinated, once again, by a serious young woman given to melancholy self-revelation.—*D.D.* (Reviewed in our issue of 7/5/04.) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

THE CLEARING
There's a twinge of cosmic sadness at the thought that Robert Redford, who once flashed the most winning smile in the world, has been reduced to playing a rental-car executive named Wayne Hayes. After Wayne is kidnapped by a fastidious former employee (Willem Dafoe), the film settles into a two-tone plot, dividing its time between a tranquil forest and the Hayes family mansion, where Eileen Hayes (Helen Mirren) condescends exquisitely to the F.B.I. This is Mirren's movie all the way, not simply because she remains cool and commanding, but because she has the wit to push that coolness to suspicious extremes. More clearly than the men around her, Mirren also sees the movie's yawning fault: the nagging threat of dullness. The first-time director Pieter Jan Brugge and the screenwriter Justin Haythe have made a thriller stripped of thrills—or, even worse, a thriller that thinks of itself as somehow rising above the vulgar pleasures of excitement.—*Anthony Lane* (7/12 & 19/04) (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Village Theatre VII.)

CONTROL ROOM
A documentary, directed by Jehane Noujaim, about Al Jazeera, the Arab television station that pulls in forty million viewers without a single game show. The film was made during the invasion of Iraq by Coalition forces, an event that it covers from an angle not entirely shared by Fox News. On every side, there was a measure of wishful thinking; the staff at Al Jazeera, for example, most of them perspicacious and engaging in the extreme, appear genuinely dumbstruck when reports stating that American forces have reached the heart of Baghdad turn out to be true. More surprising still, the pivotal figure in the picture is an American—Lieutenant Josh Rushing, a press officer, who gives the Al Jazeera side of the argument a far more sympathetic hearing than the White House would consider wise. In fact, the film itself is more judicious in its choice of talking heads than in its delivery of basic information; by the end, we still know dangerously little about the origins, schedules, and funding of the station. Those who know Al Jazeera only as a bête noire of the Secretary of Defense, however, will relish the chance to see inside.—*A.L.* (5/24/04) (Quad Cinema and Sunshine Cinema.)

LA DOLCE VITA
Federico Fellini shows off his gifts for atmosphere and image-making in this moralistic extravaganza about "the sweet life" in Rome. In the course of the nearly three-hour movie, a society journalist named Marcello (Marcello Mastroianni) abandons literary ambition and becomes a publicist. He's not a strong enough antihero to clarify Fellini's most prophetic and compelling theme—the blurring of public and private life. Still, there are some astonishing things here: the statue of Christ being hauled across Rome by a helicopter while bikinied beauties wave to Jesus; bits of a satiric yet dreamy episode involving Anita Ekberg as a Swedish-American sex goddess; and the whole sequence of Marcello taking his father to an archaic night club (apparently, glitz must fade before Fellini can find poetry in it). The enormous cast includes Anouk Aimée, Alain Cuny, and Walter Santesso, whose photographer character, Paparazzo, gave the name to celebrity-chasing photojournalists. In Italian. Originally released in 1960.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; starting July 23.)

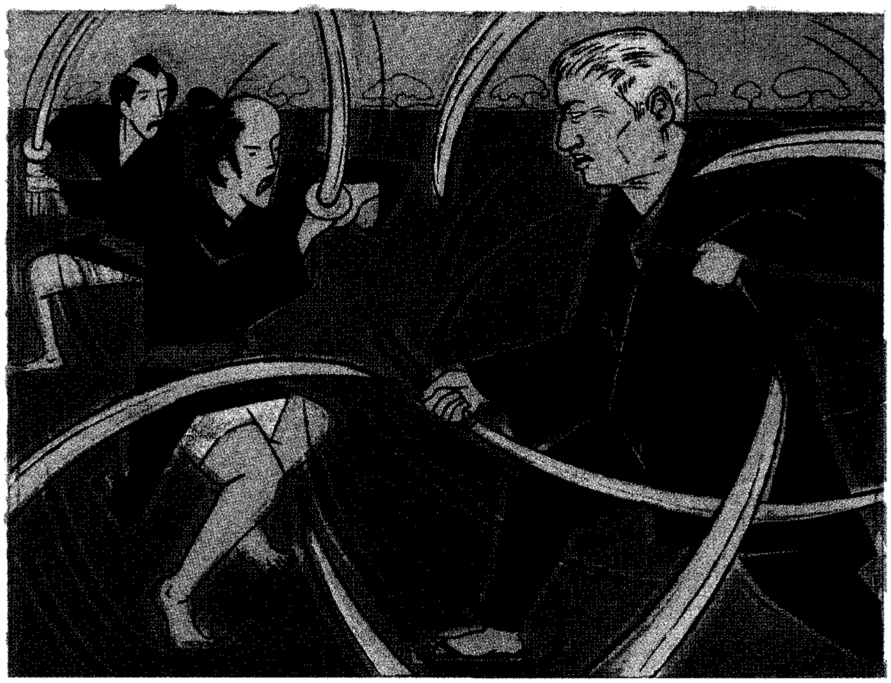


Halle Berry in "Catwoman," opening July 23.

MAXIMILIAN BODE

THE DOOR IN THE FLOOR
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 1, Empire 25, and Lincoln Square.)

FAHRENHEIT 9/11
Michael Moore's new documentary is an incendiary and viciously funny attack on the Bush Administration—a whirlwind of political charges, sinister implications, and derision—in which the President comes off as a betrayer and fool who has all the substance of a stuffed doll. Moore accuses Bush of handing part of America's sovereignty over to the Saudis; he implies that the President, after 9/11, was more effective at frightening the electorate than at pursuing the terrorists; he presents America as an oligarchy in which the wealthy control everything while luring the dispossessed to "volunteer" in endless wars. Saying that pieces of this are true, or partly true, or true when joined to counterclaims—isn't the Army mostly a boon for the working class?—doesn't settle the journalistic issue. The movie's more radical allegations, which arrive like a shower of poison darts, are impossible to sort out and evaluate, and Moore often joins facetious narration to highly edited clips in a way that recalls the agit-prop techniques of dictatorial regimes. The movie is sensational entertainment for those already convinced but may repel the uncommitted. There are a number of powerful sections, however, that are impossible to dismiss, particularly the story of Lila Lipscomb, a Flint, Michigan, mother who loses her son in the Iraq war and, giving way to unappeasable grief, makes a half-crazed pilgrimage to the White House.—*D.D.* (6/28/04) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 11, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)


Opening July 23, Takeshi Kitano's "The Blind Swordsman: Zatoichi."

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

HICKEY & BOGGS
In a rare show of Hollywood respect for a screenwriter, the director Robert Culp gave Walter Hill the credit right after the title. He earned it for his brilliantly conceived script about a private-eye team in seventies Los Angeles who try to live by a strong-silent-guy code at a time when laws and mores have outstripped their hardboiled style. Culp's staging and editing are ragged, but as Boggs he acts up a quiet storm, and he elicited superb ensemble work from the likes of Rosalind Cash, James Woods, Isabel Sanford, Michael Moriarty, and the uncredited Roger E. Mosley. The plot, about a search for a woman who is peddling stolen cash, involves at least one pervert, various money changers, Black Power spokesmen and radical-chic supporters, and a team of cops led by the perennially dyspeptic Vincent Gardenia. Nearly all of the directorial lapses are forgiven when Culp flashes an idiotic smile at his ex-wife as he watches her perform at a strip club, or when Bill Cosby, in a performance that should have pegged him as a strong, versatile leading man, repeatedly goads his partner into action. Originally released in 1972.—*M.S.* (Moving Image; July 25.)

KING ARTHUR
There's not a lot of Camelot in David Franzoni's script of the Arthurian drama. Taking a more realistic approach, the screenwriter of "Gladiator" demythologizes the characters into medieval ruffians. It's a very bad idea. Arthur (Clive Owen) merely commands a group of fighting men, Merlin (Stephen Dillane) is a sorcery-free rebel, and Guinevere (Keira Knightley), in inexplicable Xena-wear, is a warrior princess. The film's plot revolves around the Knights of the Round Table on one final mission to rescue the godson of the pope. Don't ask.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

LET'S GET FRANK
Barney Frank's role in the Clinton-impeachment hearing gets the spotlight in this documentary about the outspoken representative from Massachusetts. The filmmaker Bart Everly began following Frank in 1998, and he captures an unvarnished portrait of Frank's work on and off the floor of the House. As one of the top-ranking minority members of the House Judiciary Committee during the impeachment hearings, Frank—a gay politician who survived a sex scandal of his own—displayed an intelligence and fearless wit, and he became one of Clinton's staunchest defenders. The film's calm, no-nonsense approach is laudable. It does something rare: it gives an uplifting glimpse into the workings of modern politics.—*B.D.* (Film Forum.)

MARIA FULL OF GRACE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

METALLICA: SOME KIND OF MONSTER
A documentary by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky about life off the road, and off the rails, for the mega-selling metal rock band. The filmmakers worked for almost two years, during a turbulent and disturbing time in the group's long career. When egos clash during the recording of a new album, the group's label hires a high-priced therapist to sort through the conflict (as time goes on the therapist takes himself so seriously he ostensibly becomes part of the band). The movie captures sometimes funny, sometimes uncomfortable scenes of the creative process, and also includes interviews with old and new band members, as well as the seemingly obligatory lead-singer-in-rehab scenario. And, while it can be argued that all of this is the norm for a high-end rock-and-roll lifestyle, the film works hard to demystify the multimillionaire band, showing them as a bunch of guys, embarrassingly exposed, like teen-agers on a first date.—*B.D.* (Empire 25 and Sunshine Cinema.)

NAPOLEON DYNAMITE
The very young married team of Jared Hess (writer and director) and Jerusha Hess (writer), working in Preston, Idaho, Jared's home town, dig into the weird, flat tonalities of loserdom. Their hero, Napoleon (Jon Heder), a high-school senior, can't find anyone to play tetherball with him and gets ritually slammed into lockers by the school toughs. Yet Napoleon is oddly self-possessed; he speaks with an indignant snarl and confronts people without doing them the honor of opening his eyes and looking at them. The Hesses surround this stubborn nerd with wan dreamers and dim failures who don't see themselves as failures—their inexplicable belief in themselves is the movie's most hopeful element. Many of the scenes are brief vignettes punctuated with intentionally awkward physical comedy. The Hesses make jokes out of affectlessness and drabness—the nowheresville prefab tackiness of the houses and the emptiness of a patch of country so remote that not even popular culture touches it. The movie might have worked if it weren't so dead-aired, malicious, and cool.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE NOTEBOOK
Another melodrama from the sap-filled pen of Nicholas Sparks ("Message in a Bottle," "A Walk to Remember") is given the familiar golden-hued treatment by the director Nick Cassavetes and the screenwriter Jeremy Leven. This love story, told through flashbacks to the nineteen-forties, concerns a woman (Gena Rowlands) who is suffering from Alzheimer's and the attempt by her old flame (James Garner) to rekindle a memory of their romantic past. Their younger selves are played by Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams, and their idealized courtship is as bland and sentimental as a greeting card.—*B.D.* (Cinema 2, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

RIDING GIANTS
A surfing documentary by the "Dogtown and Z Boys" director, Stacy Peralta, that is as warm, fun, and beautiful as a Brian Wilson song. Bringing some of the sport's biggest names (Greg Noll, Jeff Clark, and the Master, Laird Hamilton) up close and personal, Peralta destroys the sport's slacker image. The intelligent and serious surfers describe how they have carved out a life on the ocean, and, above all, one is left awestruck by the physical genius of their big-wave accomplishments.—*B.D.* (Empire 25 and Sunshine Cinema.)

SPIDER-MAN 2
An action movie founded on indecision. Peter Parker (Tobey Maguire) continues to be blessed with an armory of web-based gifts, yet part of him craves the quiet life. Thus, perhaps, the unexpected—even unplanned—strangeness to Sam Raimi's film, which fulfills its brief as a summer smash but which also proceeds with a distracted and sometimes lonely air. Never has a blockbuster required so many soliloquies. There's the mournful villain Doc Ock (Alfred Molina), the hazed-over Mary Jane (Kirsten Dunst), and the puffy uncertainties of Maguire. Only the audience seems to believe in thrill and spill. Consider the moment at which Peter's lips draw close to Mary Jane's, opening slightly for a kiss, only to be interrupted by a large automobile being tossed through the window. Don't you just love it when that happens?—*A.L.* (7/12 & 19/04) (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 11, Chelsea West, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

THE TERMINAL
As Viktor Navorski, a stolid, jazz-loving bachelor from Eastern Europe, Tom Hanks speaks only a few words of English and walks with his feet turned out in a rapid waddle. Viktor's tiny country has fallen into chaos, and he's left stranded and stateless at JFK airport. For months, he sleeps in a lounge, scrounges for food and work, and carries on a wan flirtation with a slightly masochistic "stew" (Catherine Zeta-Jones). Viktor's nemesis, an ambitious customs bureaucrat (Stanley Tucci), tries to stymie him, but the phantom of the terminal turns into a modern-day Robinson Crusoe. The movie is essentially an exploration of the inner life of an airport—the humming lights and glaring emptiness of the late-night lounges, the quirks of the food-service and maintenance men who become Viktor's allies, suppliers, and then his adoring fans. Steven Spielberg directs this fable with his customary fluency and warmth, and the movie has some charming passages—a dinner party served by the maintenance men is a highlight—but the narrative lacks drive and a serious reason to exist.—*D.D.* (7/5/04) (Battery Park 11, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

DE-LOVELY
Beekman, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.
I'LL SLEEP WHEN I'M DEAD
Angelika Film Center.
I, ROBOT
Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.
SUPER SIZE ME
Angelika Film Center.
TOUCH OF PINK
Chelsea Cinemas and Quad Cinema.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 11, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Pioneer Theatre, 155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182).
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Aug. 15: "Paradise (Lost): Los Angeles on Film." July 24 at 2: "M" (1951, Joseph Losey). ♦ July 24 at 4: "To Live and Die in L.A." (1985, William Friedkin). ♦ July 25 at 2: "Hickey & Boggs" (†). ♦ July 25 at 4:30: "This Gun for Hire" (1942, Frank Tuttle). ♦ Repertory nights. July 23 at 7:30 and July 24-25 at 6:30: "If . . ." (1968, Lindsay Anderson).
ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—The *Onion* film series. July 22 at 7 and 10: "The Big Lebowski" (1998, Joel Coen). ♦ July 22-25: A Saul Levine retrospective. ♦ Films presented by the Subway Cinema collective. July 25 at 3:30: "Eastern Condors" (1986, Sammo Hung; in Cantonese).
BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—July 21 at 4:30, 6:45, and 9: "A Lucky Day" (2002, Sandra Gugliotta; in Spanish). ♦ A Rainer Werner Fassbinder retrospective. All films are in German. July 22 at 6 and 9: "Effi Briest" (1974). ♦ July 24 at 2, 4:30, 6:45, and 9: "The Marriage of Maria Braun" (1978). ♦ July 26 at 4:30, 6:45, and 9: "Gods of the Plague" (1970). ♦ A Yasujiro Ozu retrospective. All films are in Japanese. July 23 at 2, 4:30, 6:45, and 9: "The Flavor of Green Tea Over Rice" (1952). ♦ July 27 at 4:30, 6:45, and 9: "There Was a Father" (1942). ♦ Films chosen by Steve Buscemi and Jo Andres. July 25 at 3, 6, and 9: "Faces" (1968, John Cassavetes).
BRYANT PARK
Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: Free drive-in-style moviegoing. July 26: "Love Story" (1970, Arthur Hiller).
EMPIRE-FULTON FERRY STATE PARK
26 New Dock St., Brooklyn—Thursdays, starting at dusk: More free drive-in-style moviegoing. July 22: "Dog Day Afternoon" (1975, Sidney Lumet).
FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through July 22: "Cine México." All films are in Spanish. July 21-22 at 1:15, 4:45, and 8:15: "The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz" (1955, Luis Buñuel). ♦ July 21-22 at 3, 6:30, and 10: "Illusion Travels by Streetcar" (1953, Buñuel). ♦ Starting July 23 at 1:10, 4:30, and 9: "La Dolce Vita" (†).
SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. July 23-24: "The Muppets Take Manhattan" (1984, Frank Oz).
THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Through Aug. 28: "Five-Star Films: Fifty Years of Audience Favorites." July 24 at 6: "8 ½" (1963, Federico Fellini; in Italian). ♦ July 24 at 8:30: "Day for Night" (1973, François Truffaut; in French).
WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through July 29: "Every Man for Himself: The Films of Maurice Pialat." All films are in French. July 21 at 3: "Loulou" (1980). ♦ July 23 at 2: "The Human Eye" (1999, Xavier Giannoli). ♦ July 23 at 4:15 and 8:45 and July 24 at 4:15: "Police" (1985). ♦ July 23 at 6:30 and July 24 at 2: "To Our Loves" (1983). ♦ July 24 at 6:30 and July 26 at 2:30 and 6:30: "Under Satan's Sun" (1987). ♦ July 24 at 8:45: "Le Garçu" (1995). ♦ July 25 at 1 and July 26 at 4:45 and 8:45: "Turkish Chronicles" (1964) and "Love Exists" (1969). ♦ July 25 at 2:45: "French Chronicles" (1965-66) and "Village of Children" (1970). ♦ July 25 at 4:45: "The House in the Woods: Part One" (1971). ♦ July 25 at 8:15: "The House in the Woods: Part Two" (1971).

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THE
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Introduction by Luc Sante
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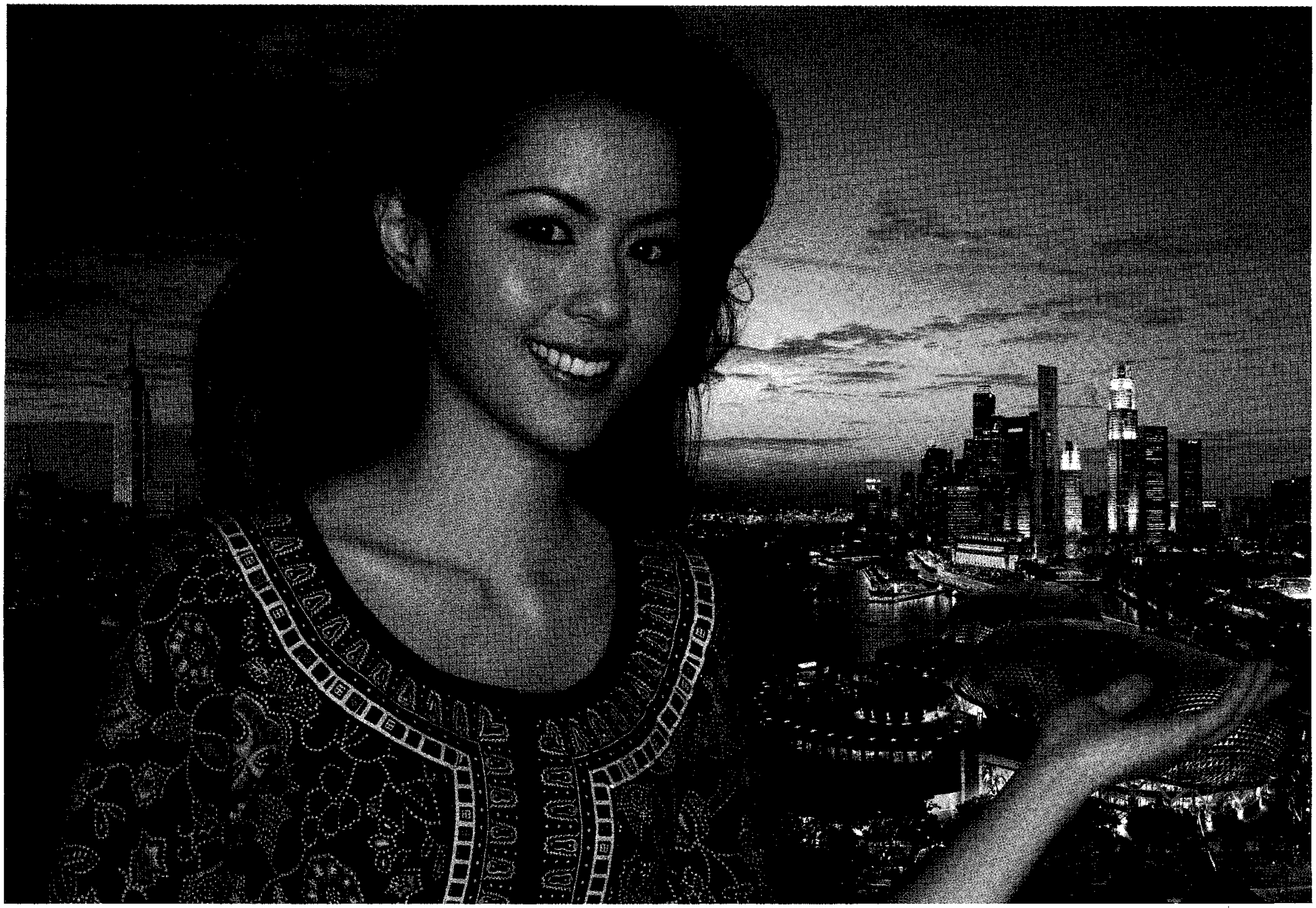

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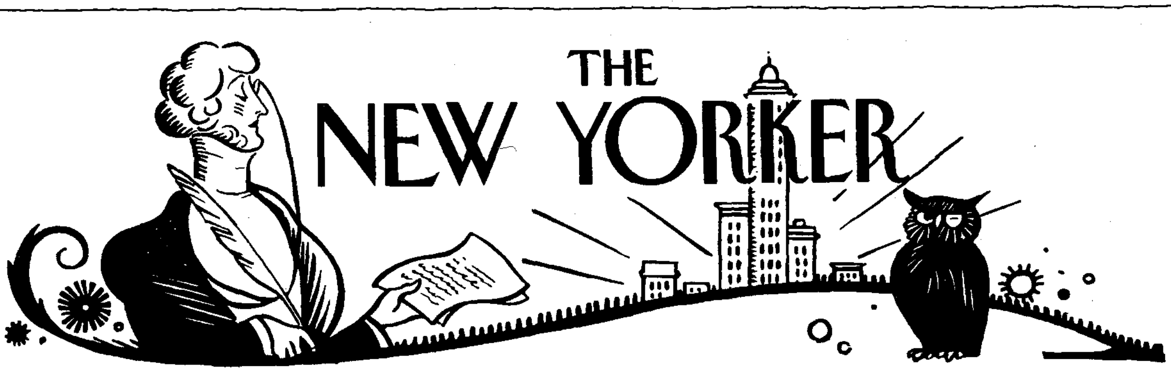
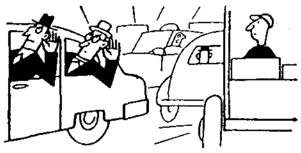


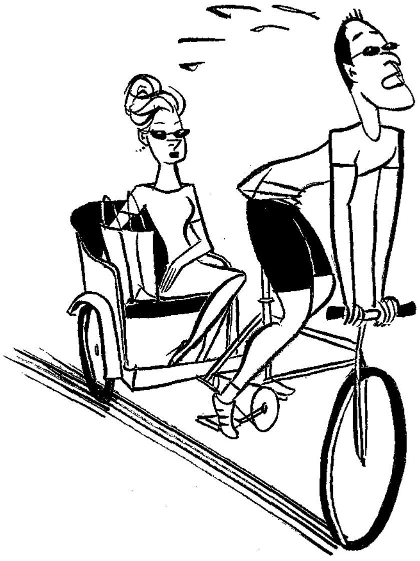
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
SOCIAL MOBILITY



One of the stranger sights in the city this summer is the bicycle taxi. Strictly speaking, it should be called a tricycle taxi, since it consists of a strong-thighed young man—there seem to be few women in the guild—on a contraption with a saddle and one wheel in front, pulling a small calèche that rides along on two wheels in back. But to call it a tricycle taxi is to summon images of child labor, and to call it, as it has been called, a "three-wheeled bicycle" lands us in realms of contradiction too confusing even for this contradictory summer. In any event, you can hail the bicycle taxi—or pedicab, to give it its full Avenue of the Americas moniker—at a corner, get into the calèche (or it a surrey? a barouche?), and take it for a ride wherever you want to go, for as long as it takes to get there. Bicycle taxis have been on the city streets for a decade, and there are at least three entrepreneurs hiring them out—the largest is the Soho-based Pedicabs of New York—but they seem newly commonplace in midtown. Unlicensed and unmetered, though not uninsured, they roam the avenues, searching for riders. (Prices are negotiable, but seem to run to whatever the pedaller thinks the pedallee can afford, taking into account how much work it will be to pull him. Price discrimination against the portly is acceptable, and a fifteen-dollar ride seems typical.)

It's hard not to admire the pedicabs' élan as they scoot up and down the avenues, darting in and out of the lines of stolid traffic, the little whatever-it-is in back just squeezing through as the couple from Altoona hold on to their digital camera for dear life, all in a blur of legs and wheels and accompanying obscenities from internal-combustion chauffeurs. Although the bicycle cabs were apparently intended for tourists, their advantages in traffic seduce the natives, too, and a big chunk of their work now seems to involve transporting people who have, in essence, got fed up with sitting in stalled traffic in a taxicab. (The other day, a New Yorker hailed a pedicab for the first time, because she was late for her workout. Pumping hard, sweat pouring, the bicycle pedaller got her to the gym on time.)



To try out a bicycle cab, even in a semi-philosophical spirit, is to be caught up in a rush of exhilaration, embarrassment, and potential significances. Heady and vaguely Edith Whartonish as it is to be pulled around town in an open carriage, it is, at the same time, disconcerting to have someone else's physical labor quite so plainly, quite so clearly and publicly, quite so accusingly, visible as the source of your forward movement. Normally, in New York and elsewhere, machinery and ritual intercede between the puller and the pulled. The taxi- or livery-cab-driver, whose hours, wages, and health-insurance predicaments are unknown to the rider, is enthroned behind Plexiglas, and he has a whole set of rituals (the right-hand seat piled high with personal objects, the endless cell-phone conversation) designed to salve his self-respect, and to give exploitation at least the appearance of self-reliance.

The pedicab is, no getting around it, a rickshaw with pedals. (In fact, the second-leading pedicab company is called Manhattan Rickshaw.) It offers, in a pointedly symbolic, Bertolt Brecht-meets-Barbara Ehrenreich package, both the eternal facts of capitalism—the capitalist proceeds from home to office by dint of someone else's sweat—and the essential ironies of the post-industrial era: the more emancipated we seem to become from physical labor, the more

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

physical labor is left for someone else to do. What Robert Reich has talked about for years, and John Edwards has talked about for the past several months—that the gap has widened between the wealthy few and everybody else—is, in the bicycle taxi, suddenly given a local habitation and a loud bell. The feeling is not even so much capitalist as feudal. You are the lord of the manor, being pulled through the streets on a sedan chair; he is Piers Plowman, in spandex shorts.

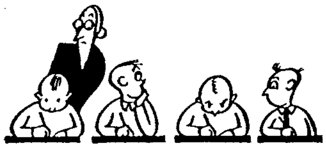
Riding in a bicycle taxi, one feels nostalgia for the bicycle messenger of the Reagan era. The bicycle messenger, with his whistle and his disdain, was the embodiment of underclass resentment and underclass style, and of a booming economy, which demanded that documents *be here now*. As oblivious of stoplights as he was of pedestrians, he owned the streets. Everyone yielded to him, or learned to. Are the pedicab drivers of today happy? Well, they are on their way somewhere. And they will tell you flatly that it is the best job they can find. The pedicab may merely suggest rather than entirely embody the new America of puller and pulled, but it is a sharp symbol of a new reality. It even evokes new metaphors. For instance, the thing about George W. Bush is not that he was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple. It is that he has been in a bicycle taxi all his life but has not yet bothered to notice that someone else is pedalling.

The puzzling thing for anyone outside America is the conservatism and docility of the American working people. In France, their confrères are off on their five-week paid vacations; in Canada, they have brought a straight-out Socialist party back into a position of influence, because they cling stubbornly to their right to free national health care. In America, though, we are all remarkably inclined to take it on the chin and keep pedalling. The old explanation of this was, essentially, the bicycle-messenger compact: in exchange for hard work and long hours, you got to pedal your own bicycle to a better life. But over the past twenty-five years that compact has been dissolving. Maybe we are having more feudal moments because American life is becoming more feudal. An open, mercantile society is a society run on the bargain of future prospects: in exchange for your subservient labor, we will provide hope. A feudal society is, simply, a society run on the bargain of fear: in exchange for your labor and subservience, we will provide security. Is it possible that some Republican delegate might hop in a pedicab this summer and pause to ruminate on an economy in which some are always pulled and more and more are always pulling?

—*Adam Gopnik*

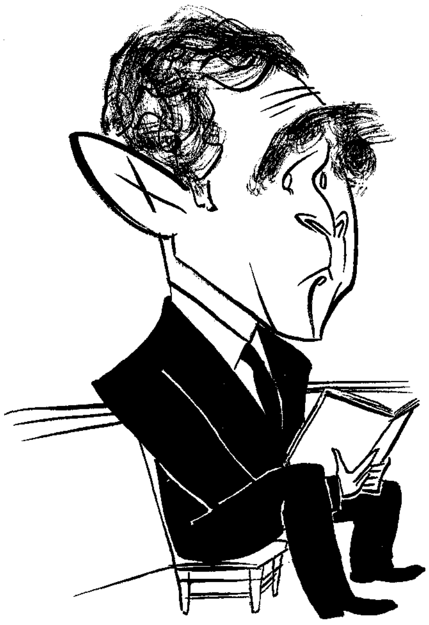
DEPT. OF EDUCATION

THE PET GOAT APPROACH



Although you do not know his name, Siegfried (Zig) Engelmann is one of the most talked-about authors in the country right now. His most prominent work, which you have not read, is a story for second graders. It begins, "A girl got a pet goat."

Engelmann's story is the one that George W. Bush was reading in a Florida classroom on the morning of September 11, 2001, at the moment he learned of the terrorist attacks. A videotape of the President holding the book open while staring blankly into space for seven minutes provides the most memorable scene in Michael Moore's movie "Fahrenheit 9/11." Engelmann has not seen the film, but when he heard about his secondhand cameo he reread his story. "I don't remember writing it," he said the other day from his office at the University of Oregon, in Eugene. That may be because it is one of more than a thousand he has written in the past thirty years.



George W. Bush

Curious viewers of Moore's film who have tried to track down the book "My Pet Goat" have been unsuccessful, for two reasons: Moore, in his voice-over, got the title wrong—it is "The Pet Goat"—and it is not a book but an exercise in a workbook called "Reading Mastery 2." This much was sussed out last month by a resourceful blogger named Peter Smith after he studied the raw footage from the Emma E. Booker Elementary School. Noticing that the teacher repeatedly cued the class with the same precise language ("Get ready to read these words the fast way"), Smith guessed that some particular pedagogical theory was at work. That's what led him to Direct Instruction, a controversial teaching model that Engelmann developed in the nineteen-sixties.

"The whole idea is to do an efficient job with every single kid," Engelmann, who is seventy-two and is a professor of education, said. His basic principle is that if a child isn't learning it is always because the teacher is doing something to confuse him. Direct Instruction aims to eliminate that problem by introducing bite-size concepts that build directly on ones that have already been mastered, and by scripting every word of every lesson, including which words of encouragement teachers may and may not use. As the D.I. Web site puts it, "The popular valuing of teacher creativity and autonomy as high priorities must give way to a willingness to follow certain carefully prescribed instructional practices."

"We don't give a damn what the teacher thinks, what the teacher feels," Engelmann said. "On the teachers' own time they can hate it. We don't care, as long as they do it." Engelmann claims that Direct Instruction is one of the few teaching methods that have been consistently shown to improve student achievement, especially among disadvantaged children. "Traditionalists die over this," he said. "But in terms of data we whump the daylights out of them."

For years, Direct Instruction's impressive performance in large-scale studies did little to win over his critics, who call his techniques "controlling" and "robotic." D.I.'s phonics-based reading curriculum—Engelmann has also applied his principles to math, science, social studies, and handwriting—sometimes requires children to chant words in unison while a teacher snaps her fingers to keep time.

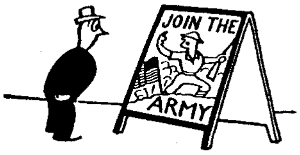
D.I.'s fortunes began to change in 2001, when Bush introduced his No Child Left Behind legislation, which mandated that only "scientifically based" educational programs be eligible for federal funding. And here's where Michael Moore missed an opportunity. No Child Left Behind has meant big profits for the publisher of the D.I. curricula, McGraw-Hill. So it's easy to imagine one of Moore's hallmark montages, spinning circumstantial evidence into a conspirational web: a sepia-toned photograph from the thirties of, say, Prescott Bush and James McGraw, Jr., palling around on Florida's Jupiter Island; a film clip from the eighties of Harold McGraw, Jr., joining the advisory panel of Barbara Bush's literacy foundation; Harold McGraw III posing with President George W. Bush as part of his transition team; and, to tie it all together, former McGraw-Hill executive vice-president John Negroponte being sworn in as the new Ambassador to Iraq.

One person who wouldn't be included in such a conspiracy is Zig Engelmann. Engelmann calls himself a "political rebel," but his inclinations are hard left. He hasn't decided if he will vote for John Kerry, Ralph Nader, some alternative progressive party, or nobody at all. He is not fond of Bush. "For whatever it's worth, I think Iraq is a total circle jerk," he said. "I couldn't think of how to do it worse."

—Daniel Radosh

CHEST OUT, STOMACH IN

ALL THAT YOU CAN BE



There has been a great deal of speculation recently that the government might reinstate the draft at some point, in order to replenish the nation's armed forces. Military and government officials have, for the most part, dismissed such talk. As Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said in an interview the other day, "We're perfectly capable of increasing the incentives and the inducements to attract people into the armed services." For years, the military has offered its recruits free tuition, specialized training, and a host of other benefits to compensate for the tremendous sacrifices they are called upon to make. Lately, many of them have been taking advantage of another perk: free cosmetic surgery.

"Anyone wearing a uniform is eligible," Dr. Bob Lyons, the chief of plastic surgery at Brooke Army Medical Center, said recently, in his office in San Antonio. It is true: personnel in all four branches of the military and members of their immediate families can get face-lifts, nose jobs, breast enlargements, liposuction, or any other kind of elective cosmetic alteration, at taxpayer expense. (For breast enlargements, patients must supply their own implants.) There is no limit on the number of cosmetic surgeries one soldier can have, although, Lyons said, "we don't do extreme makeovers in the military." The commanding officer has to approve the time off for any soldier who is having surgery. For most procedures, there's at least a ten-day recovery period, and while soldiers are recuperating they're on paid medical leave rather than vacation.

A Defense Department spokeswoman confirmed the existence of the plastic-surgery benefit. According to the Army, between 2000 and 2003 its doctors performed four hundred and ninety-six breast enlargements and a thousand three hundred and sixty-one liposuction surgeries on soldiers and their dependents. In the first three months of 2004, it performed sixty breast enhancements and two hundred and thirty-one liposuctions.

Mario Moncada, an Army private who was recently treated for losing the vision in one eye in Iraq, said that he knows several female soldiers who have received free breast enlargements: "We're out there risking our lives. We deserve benefits like that."

Janis Garcia, a former lieutenant commander and JAG attorney in the Navy, who is married to a retired Navy fighter pilot, says she grew up hating the way she looked. "I wouldn't even smile in my own wedding pictures." She checked in to the Naval Medical Center in San Diego for a nose job, a chin realignment, and a jaw reconstruction, free of charge. She also had her teeth straightened. "It changed my appearance drastically, and I became a more confident person," she said. "It literally changed the direction of my life." The doctors told her the work she had done would have cost her nearly a hundred thousand dollars.

It is hard to begrudge young servicemen and women access to free medical care or quick self-improvement, considering the acts of heroism they perform every day. Nonetheless, some taxpayers and members of the armed forces may feel that there are better uses for the nation's resources.

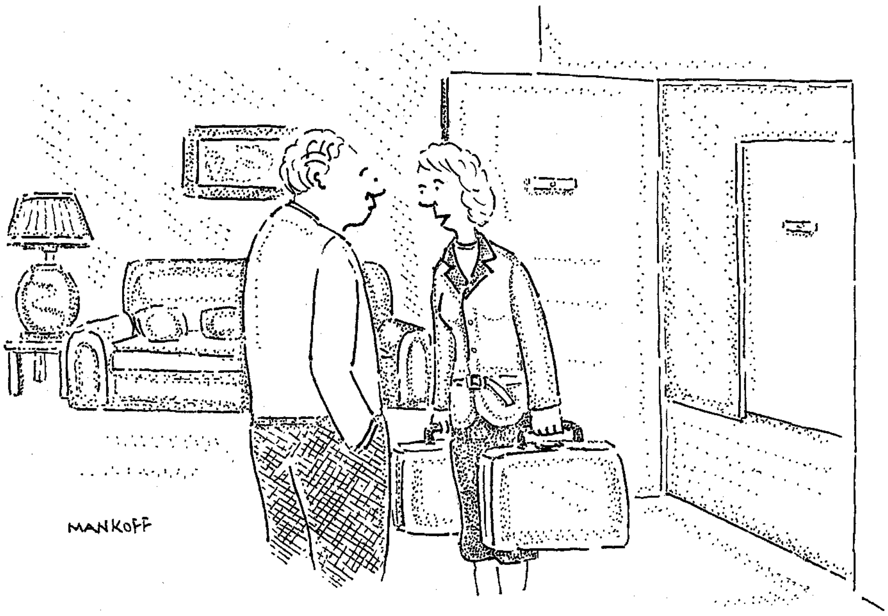
"I'm appalled the military would support liposuction," Bill Fay, a captain in the Arizona Army National Guard, who is now serving in Nasiriyah, wrote in an e-mail. "This is a purely functional organization that does not exist for their livelihood or enjoyment."

The Army's rationale is that, as a spokeswoman said, "the surgeons have to have someone to practice on." "The benefit of offering elective cosmetic surgery to soldiers is more for the surgeon than for the patient," Lyons said. "If there's a happy soldier or sailor at the end of that operation, that's an added benefit, but that's not the reason we do it. We do it to maintain our skills"—skills that are critical, he added, when it comes to doing reconstructive surgery on soldiers who have been wounded.

Some plastic surgeons question this logic. Dr. Shaun Parson, a prominent cosmetic surgeon in Arizona, says that cosmetic surgery and reconstructive surgery are two separate specialties. "If the Army is doing breast augmentations, it's doing it to practice breast augmentations, period."

There has been talk lately among soldiers that this benefit is indeed being used as a recruiting tool, but there is no mention of it in any of the recruiting literature. "The Army does not offer elective cosmetic surgery to entice anyone," Dr. Lyons said. "I would be disappointed with the maturity of the young women in this country if they're joining the service with the thought of getting breast augmentations."

—Karen Schaler



"There's nothing wrong with our marriage, but the spectre of gay marriage has hopelessly eroded the institution."

• •

SECOND FIDDLE DEPT.
NO. 1 AUTHORITY

In the early nineteen-eighties, Paul Light, who was then an assistant professor of political science at the University of Virginia, was advised by his faculty mentor to examine the changing nature of the American Vice-Presidency. "You know, it was kind of an interesting period," Light recalled the other day. "Mondale had just left office, and there was an obvious and significant change in the way the office was operating—it seemed to be some kind of turning point."

Light followed through on the recommendation, and in 1984 he published the book "Vice Presidential Power: Advice and Influence in the White House." The title was more or less a joke, a play on Richard Neustadt's famous "Presidential Power." Throughout most of American history, after all, from John Adams's declaring the Vice-Presidency "the most insignificant office" to the fictional Veep Alexander Throttlebottom's haplessness in the musical "Of Thee I Sing," the office has been regarded as a figurehead's position, a laughingstock. "I later came to believe that my mentor got me into the Vice-Presidency because he might have hoped that I would disappear with the topic," Light said.

If only it were so. Light, who is now a professor at N.Y.U.'s Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, has written seventeen books since 1984, none of them having to do with the office of VPOTUS, and yet, perhaps because the topic has a way of reappearing every four years during Convention season, Light's visibility seems only to increase. Apparently, there isn't much competition in the realm of Vice-Presidential scholarship. "It cleared the field," Light said of his book, which is out of print. "I don't know anybody else who looks at the office systematically."

"I think there's a general agreement that, yeah, it's not Hubert Humphrey's Vice-Presidency anymore," Light went on. But there seems to be no one available to dispute his claim that it was Nelson Rockefeller who began transforming the office. ("He created a Vice-Presidential seal, believe it or not," Light said. "He paid for it himself, and he also refused to fly in the windowless air transport that Agnew was confined to. So basically the Vice-Presidency evolved in part because of Rockefeller's deep pockets.")

A glance at Light's old press clips turns up his thoughts on more recent Vice-Presidential candidates past:

On Dan Quayle: "You feel badly for the guy, you really do."

On Al Gore: "Gore's greatest value is as a second set of eyes on every decision."

This month, with the John Edwards announcement, the ditch-Cheney talk, and the two Conventions looming, Light's phone has hardly stopped ringing. (On NPR the other day, Light said of Edwards, "He's got a high-wattage personality, and I think he wears well, so we'll see.") And he's had just about enough. "Sometimes I feel like Al Pacino in 'The Godfather III,' " Light said. "Do you remember the scene where he says, 'Just when I thought that I was out, they pull me back in'? Well, that happens every four years with me. And I like to think that I've gone on to bigger and better topics."

Hasn't anyone read "Thickening Government: Federal Hierarchy and the Diffusion of Accountability" or "Artful Work: The Politics of Social Security Reform"?

"I really get tired of educating reporters on how the Vice-Presidency has changed," Light continued. "I mean, they're always asking, 'What, exactly, does the Vice-President do?' Well, the job description in the Constitution is pretty limited: break ties in the Senate and hang around for the President to die. I keep wanting to say, 'Wouldn't you like to talk about, um, organizational behavior, or how to build high-performing nonprofits?' "

Maybe next week. In the meantime, Professor Light, what do you think about Dick Cheney?

"I read in the *Post* that the Bush campaign was saying that Cheney's the greatest Vice-President ever. It's kind of an insult to Cheney to call him Vice-President. He's got this weird combination of roles and responsibilities that make him a kind of legitimizer, mentor, grim reaper, tutor, and grandfather. He's what I call the Velcro Vice-President: there's practically no bad news in this Administration that doesn't somehow stick to Dick Cheney." Light believes that it is possible that Bush will replace him. "I think it'll be tempting to the end," Light said. "The only comparison would be the decision to drop Rockefeller back in '76, which was done early, and, you

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reality,

without the

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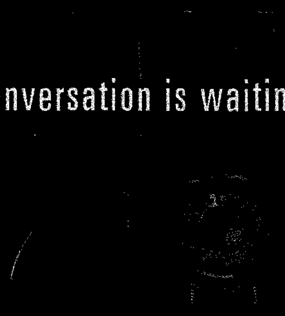

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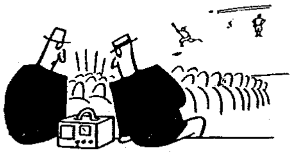
know, probably ended up hurting Ford more than helping."

Light recently considered writing an op-ed piece, which would have said, in effect, "If called, I will not quote," but he ultimately decided against making what he called "a Shermanesque withdrawal from the field." Instead, while screening his calls this summer, he has come up with a new plan.

"I should offer a bounty to a young scholar, or establish some sort of a fellowship, or a scholarship for somebody, to write a new book on the Vice-Presidency," he said. "That's really my only way out, it seems. I should pick some lucky person and say, 'Look, I'll give you ten thousand dollars to write a book on this.' "

—Ben McGrath

THE OLD BALLGAME CAMARADERIE



Ralph Kiner, the Hall of Fame ballplayer who has been a Mets broadcaster for four decades, showed up at Shea Stadium early the other day for one of the interleague games against the Yankees. He stopped in at his usual center of operations—the Mets' broadcast area has been designated the Ralph Kiner Television Booth—but didn't stay long.

"I'm not going to work announcing this one, just visit some of the guys," he said. "I miss the camaraderie of the old days, the way it used to be."

Kiner is eighty-one years old, more than six feet tall, and sturdy-looking, with erect posture, a calm, courtly manner, and an earnest, sun-beaten face. He had on a burnt-orange sports jacket, a multicolored silk shirt, cream-colored pants, and spotless white shoes. His 1975 Hall of Fame ring was on his wedding-ring finger.

Baseball fans know that Ted Williams put Kiner on his list of the twenty best hitters of all time; that Kiner was a Navy pilot in the Second World War; that, as a rookie outfielder with the Pittsburgh Pirates, in 1946, he led the National League in home runs, and that he did so again for the next six seasons; and that he retired at the age of thirty-two because of back problems. He joined the Mets in 1962, their first season, to do both radio and television broadcasting, and, for what seems like forever, with a hiatus or two, he has hosted a post-game show called "Kiner's Korner," which is as raffish as always but which, sadly, no longer features Kiner pouring a glass of Rheingold Extra Dry beer.

Kiner dropped by the main broadcast booth to say hello to the guys calling the game, then made his way downstairs to the tunnel that leads to the visitors' dugout. Groundskeepers, ball boys, players, and sportswriters stopped to call out "Hi, Ralph!" Someone pushing a cart full of bats said, "Ralph! What do you think Yogi said when Piazza was honored the other night for his record number of home runs as a catcher?" Kiner smiled. Several people chorused, " 'I knew my record would stand until it's broken!' " Kiner continued onward, the field coming into view over the lip of the dugout, a lovely thing to see. The Yankees were out there, taking batting practice. "We used to be fined if we were caught talking to players on the opposing team," Kiner said. "But I always wanted to talk to all the guys who knew baseball. I still find camaraderie with some of the guys. Joe Torre is an old friend."

An elderly man sat alone on the Yankee bench, out of uniform. He resembled a wilting leprechaun. A credential hanging on a ribbon around his neck identified him as "Arthur Richman—Senior Advisor." Kiner greeted him cordially.

Richman looked sad. "You not doing the game?" he asked.

Kiner said, "Not today. I'll do it next in a week or so. What's new, Arthur?" Kiner regarded him with affection and went on, "Arthur, the guys say you're the most pessimistic person in the world. You always say to everybody, 'You have no chance to win.' "

"I go way back with you," Richman said. "I know everybody."

"You know more people in baseball than any man alive," Kiner said. "You're the one who recommended Torre to Steinbrenner. You knew Casey Stengel as well as anyone."

"Stengel never slept," Richman said. "He'd stay up all night, talking."

"That's why you'd see him sleeping on the bench," Kiner said. "Arthur," he added quickly, "you've got your funeral all planned."

"Eight pallbearers—you and seven others, every one a Hall of Famer," Richman said, perking up.

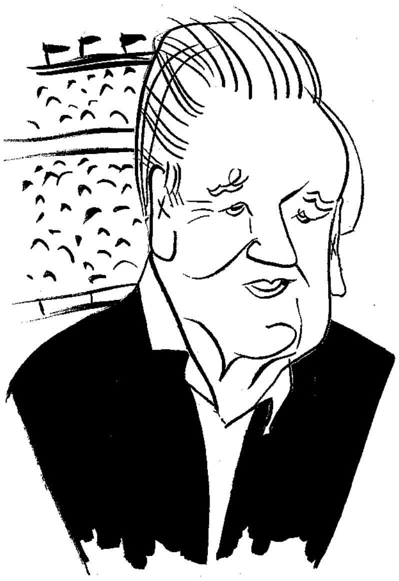
"You got us our plane tickets, hotel accommodations, everything," Kiner said. "That's very considerate."

"I'm not sick or anything, but everything's taken care of," Richman said.

Kiner walked quickly out onto the field, to the batting cage, where Joe Torre was conferring with Don Mattingly, who is now one of his hitting coaches. When Torre spotted Kiner, he came over and grinned majestically.

"You gonna remind me again about my brief career with the Mets?" Torre asked.

"You mean when you hit into four straight double plays in one game?" Kiner replied. "It tied the record! And you blamed it on Felix Millan, the man in front of you."



Ralph Kiner

"It was his fault," Torre said. "How's your golf, Ralph?"

"Good," Kiner said. "Remember when we started playing together? You weren't any good. But I made you better."

Torre lifted his eyebrows and laughed.

"Thanks for the expensive wine you sent me for my birthday," Kiner said. "When is your birthday?"

"This month," Torre said. "I'll be sixty-four."

Kiner pretended to look impressed.

"Yep! Sixty-four," Torre said. "But I've got an eight-year-old daughter. I like to boast about that."

—Lillian Ross

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

IN THE HIDING ZONE

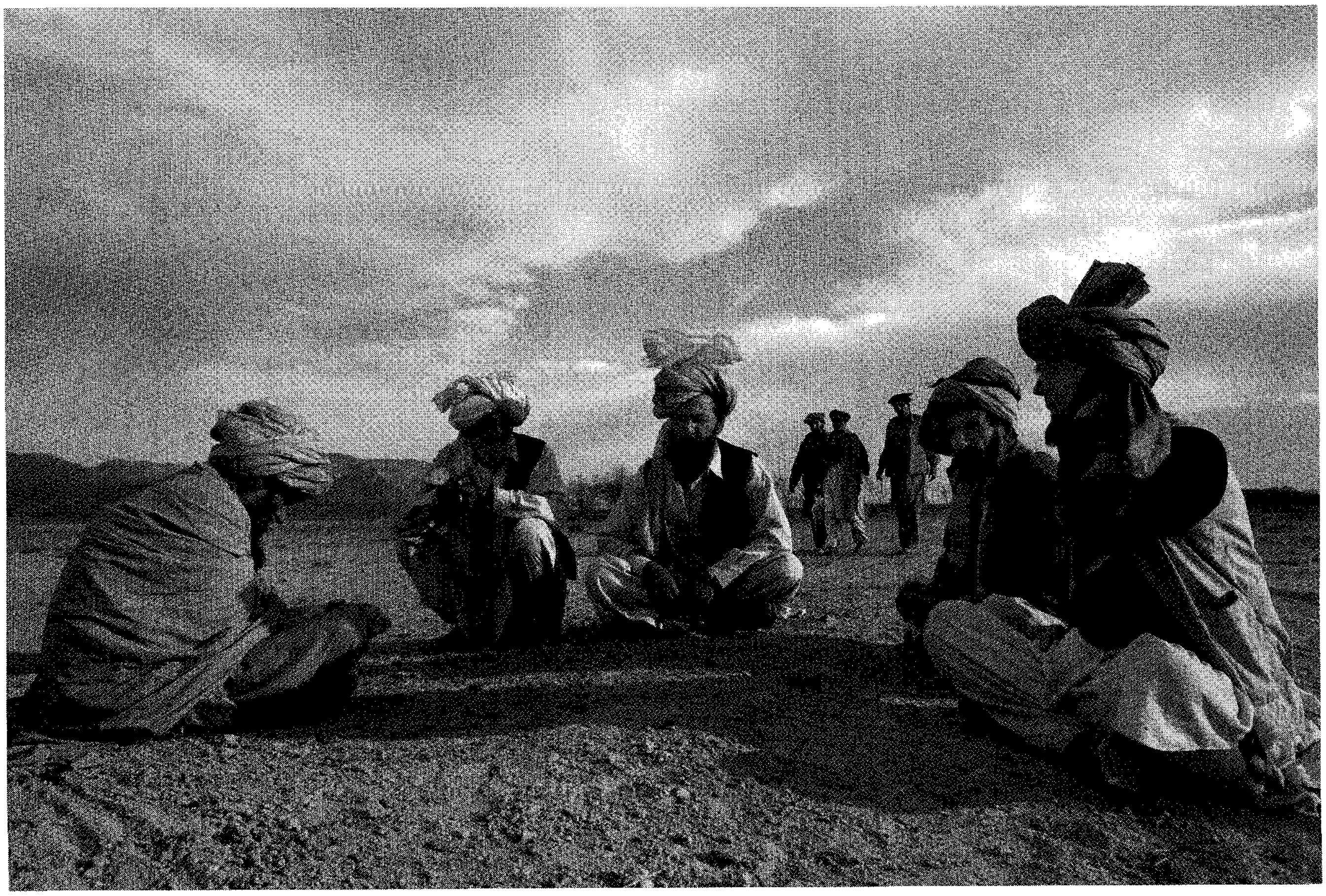
Pakistan's lawless tribal borderland has become a virtual jihadi highway.

BY ELIZA GRISWOLD

Khalid Wazir, who is thirty and wears his hair in a mini-pompadour, twirls the tips of his mustache when he's nervous. The habit was little in evidence when I first met him, two years ago, through his cousins, a family of generous Wazirs who had befriended me while I was reporting on the American military campaign in Afghanistan. In those days, Khalid occupied himself, when he felt like it, by selling satellite phones in the Pakistani frontier town of Peshawar, but he often spent his days stalking sandgrouse with his dogs Floppy and Scooby and complaining about local Talibs, who refused to let women dance at family weddings. But last summer Khalid assumed the position of Khan Bahadur, or Brave Leader, and became the nominal chief of some thirty thousand people in North Waziristan, a twenty-nine-hundred-square-mile tribal area that runs along the thousand-mile border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. During the Raj, the British granted the title to powerful tribal leaders in order to forge a link between the colonial government and the Pashtun tribesmen. Khalid's grandfather Mianwar Shah was the first Khan Bahadur. Khalid inherited the title from an uncle, through a series of familial turns.

Today, Khalid's face has thinned, and his laugh, which used to punctuate almost every sentence, is a rare occurrence. Being Khan Bahadur comes with not only the dubious trappings of a colonial factotum but a catalogue of obligations to his tribesmen, the Wazirs. He must settle their land disputes, pay their medical bills, offer them a bed when they show up at his door, and act as their emissary when they are arrested for smuggling commodities like wood from the tribal areas into Pakistan. Worse, the job description has now come to include negotiating deals between the Pakistani military and the tribal elders, or maliks, whose people are often accused of sheltering Al Qaeda terrorists. By virtue of a manufactured title, Khalid has become the de-facto prince of a forbidden kingdom, a putative expert on the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden, and gatekeeper to a region traditionally closed to outsiders.

Not long ago, an international news organization called Khalid to ask if it was true that Osama bin Laden was hiding in Waziristan. "How was I supposed to know?" he asked me afterward. "If he's there, why don't they go catch him? I have nothing to do with it." He went on, "I am the Khan Bahadur. I am the chief. I know there are terrorists in Waziristan? George Bush was elected President by the state of Florida. His brother is governor of Florida. George



TIME

Pakistani incursions in search of Al Qaeda have enraged the fiercely independent Wazir tribesmen. Photograph by Yuri Kozyrev.

Bush knew there were terrorists training in Florida?"

Waziristan, North and South, composes two of Pakistan's seven semi-autonomous tribal areas that border its North-West Frontier Province. (The others are Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, Mohmand, and Bajaur.) A stretch of arid, deserted land, Waziristan has served as a buffer between rival empires since the eleventh century, when, as the story goes, a tribe of Wazirs (advisers) migrated there from central Afghanistan. The Wazirs are Pashtuns, a cluster of about sixty families that occupy the tribal belt along the Durand line, which nominally divides Afghanistan from Pakistan. According to tradition, they are the sons of a common ancestor, Qais (a descendant of Saul), who was converted to Islam by the Prophet himself. Qais is said to have had four sons; the fourth, Karlanri, a foundling, is the father of the Wazirs. Of all the Pashtun tribes, the Wazirs are known as the most conservative and irascible: the ones to give the most trouble to any outsider who attempts to penetrate their land, which they consider as veiled, or in purdah.

No foreign invader, from Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan to the British Empire, has ever been able to control the Wazirs. For both the British and the government of Pakistan, the notoriety of the wild Pashtun tribesmen conveniently allowed them to neglect the border. One result is that the Wazirs' ethnic identity has begun to yield to the influence of radical Islam, and the region is now home to a variety of Central Asians, including Uzbeks, Chechens, and Uighurs (Islamists from the Xinjiang province of China). More recently, the region has become a haven for Al Qaeda members. As Islamic fighters fled the mountains of Afghanistan, Waziristan became a virtual jihadi highway. Some settled near the South Waziristan town of Wana, reportedly building new training camps and launching attacks across the border in Afghanistan.

The United States, which has twenty thousand troops pursuing Taliban and Al Qaeda elements in Afghanistan, has embarked upon a seventy-three-million-dollar project to secure the border. As part of its antiterrorist strategy, the U.S. relies on the Pakistani Army to be its "anvil," and President Bush has asked Congress for a five-year, three-billion-dollar assistance package for Pakistan, and has granted it the status of a major non-NATO ally. The U.S. has also earmarked twenty-four million dollars for the construction, by the Pakistani Army Corps of Engineers and private contractors, of a web of roads throughout Waziristan and the rest of Pakistan's tribal belt. Earlier this year, in an effort to capture bin Laden, the Pakistani military launched a series of operations against Al Qaeda, sending seventy thousand troops into the tribal areas on the new roads. If bin Laden was there, he eluded them. In general, the relative failure of the military's efforts in Waziristan reflects a deeper ambivalence about betraying its own. Some observers believe that it wasn't until this winter, when two assassination attempts were made against Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf, and American pressure increased, that efforts to drive Al Qaeda from Waziristan became serious. Not surprisingly, the Wazirs and other local tribesmen aren't happy about these incursions. And their inherent contempt for the Pakistani troops is only deepened by their view, which I heard voiced repeatedly in Waziristan, that the Pakistanis were acting as mere agents of the United States.

Washington has also launched a development program in the tribal area. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is rehabilitating a hundred and thirty schools and digging wells. Many of the programs, which are intended to mollify the tribesmen, started in the nineteen-nineties as an attempt to eradicate narcotics trafficking. The U.S. government was already working on a crop-substitution program to replace poppies with chili peppers and other foodstuffs. "One way we can address anti-U.S. sentiment is by providing some things the community leaders think they need," a Western diplomat in Islamabad said. "They will appreciate the U.S.'s assistance." Yet it's hard to imagine chili peppers defusing the fury of the Wazirs. "There have been social programs since the nineteen-seventies in the tribal areas," Husain Haqqani, a visiting fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in Washington, D.C., told me. "I don't think there are any empirical data to suggest that after your house has been intrusively searched you say, 'Oh, those are

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In any case, the United States' goal is now the same as that of the Pakistani operations: ferreting out Al Qaeda. "We have been pressing Pakistan ever since the fall of the Taliban to deny use of its territory to Al Qaeda and Taliban remnants," a senior official at the State Department said. "We certainly believe there are remnants of Al Qaeda or those closely allied with it up there. There will need to be a continuing effort. This is not something they're going to do with one three-day operation." When it comes to the welfare of the tribesmen, he went on, "It's U.S. policy to try as much as we can to assist these people. But you can't just walk in with a bunch of Americans and say, 'Hi! We're trying to help.' "

On a late-spring morning, I travelled with Khalid along one of Waziristan's new roads. Since the tribesmen hold the United States accountable for actions taken by the Pakistani military, all Westerners, already suspect, are outlawed. The Pakistani government itself has banned foreigners from visiting the region. Because of Khalid's position, however, the ban didn't apply to me. (Later, when I visited the area without him, I was detained for several hours by Pakistani military intelligence. A *Newsweek* reporter travelling with me was held for six weeks, along with our driver.)

To an outsider, most of Waziristan seems utterly desolate, as if a flood had just receded from its surface. Along the Afghan border, eight-thousand-foot mountains descend into plains of petrified mud. The horizon is broken only by three kinds of structures: brick pickets, or forts—single crenellated towers built and abandoned by the British—from which Pakistani troops now peer down at passersby; the mud fortresses of Pashtun tribesmen, who live in groups of a hundred or so behind twenty-foot walls; and whitewashed religious schools, or madrassas, trimmed in Day-Glo orange, green, and blue. Above one of these schools, on a bald hillside in the garrison town of Razmak, in North Waziristan, until recently white rocks spelled out a tribute to the Taliban's one-eyed commander: "LONG LIVE MULLAH OMAR." The surrounding land once belonged to the Faqir of Ipi, a Muslim holy man who trounced the British in a series of military engagements throughout the nineteen-thirties.

That day, Khalid was taking me to see a school in Sin Tanga, a remote valley in North Waziristan. On either side of the fresh macadam, the land stretched away into desert. We travelled with Khalid's sidekick, Ayub, a soft-spoken man with a caterpillar mustache, and two local leaders. One of them, Malik Tawiz Khan, wore a glossy black turban and rode next to Khalid, who was driving a cousin's green Suzuki. A red toothbrush poked out from Malik Tawiz Khan's vest pocket as he turned to talk to Ayub and me, in the back seat. Khalid translated. Malik Tawiz Khan had opened the school that we were going to visit, he said, but he wanted more help than the government was providing. The Pakistani government awards contracts for schools, hospitals, and water projects to local maliks. But corruption is so rampant that the villagers receive very little. The school in Sin Tanga was a rare example of one that actually functioned.

As we lurched over an unfinished section of the road, Malik Tawiz Khan kept jabbing a stubby finger out the jeep window and repeating, "Khan Bahadur," to indicate that the wasteland around us belonged to Khalid. Khalid smiled, and explained that he had his own plan for combatting the influence of radical Islam. It doesn't include military action. ("Kill one terrorist, make ten," he says.) Instead, he wants to build schools, hospitals, agriculture projects, and wells.

It's a familiar argument in these parts: only education and economic development can counterbalance the ignorance and fury that breed religious fanaticism. For Khalid, though, the argument is less about enlightenment than about Realpolitik. "The mullah gives a man one meal, we will give him two," he said. In the tribal belt, where wells are as scarce as schools, the religious leaders serve all the needs of the community. Development, according to Khalid, will undermine the authority of radical Islam by demonstrating to the tribesmen that they needn't rely blindly on mullahs for their subsistence.

Malik Tawiz Khan turned in his seat and offered me a simpler imperative. Pulling a .30-calibre pistol from his gray vest and holding it to his temple in the jiggling car, he said, "If you people give

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us education, we will shoot the mullahs!" A few minutes later, he added, "No foreigners can come here without permission. If you came here alone, we would shoot you." He raised the gun to his temple again, with greater flourish. It was just another way of flattering Khan Bahadur, who was acting as my protector.

I said, "How are 'we' supposed to build schools if our very presence here is forbidden?" He didn't answer.

As we passed the dry gulch of the Khaisor Ravine, two small boys with slingshots and a girl in a cranberry-colored head scarf jumped for the low branches of an acacia tree. In the absence of school, Khalid explained, children are sent out to forage for the day's meal. Then he showed me an irrigation ditch that he had built recently, a cement flood wall to redirect water—when there is water—into the arid hillside. Just above the wall was the only patch of green we'd seen for sixty miles, an oasis of thin trees that swayed in the breeze. In its center stood a gleaming white three-story madrassa, belonging to the Jamait-e-Ulema-e-Islam (J.U.I.) Party, the most militant group in a six-party Islamist alliance that now governs Pakistan's frontier region. Many of the madrassas preach a form of radical Islam akin to Wahhabism. They also feed, clothe, and educate many of the children of Khalid's tribe.

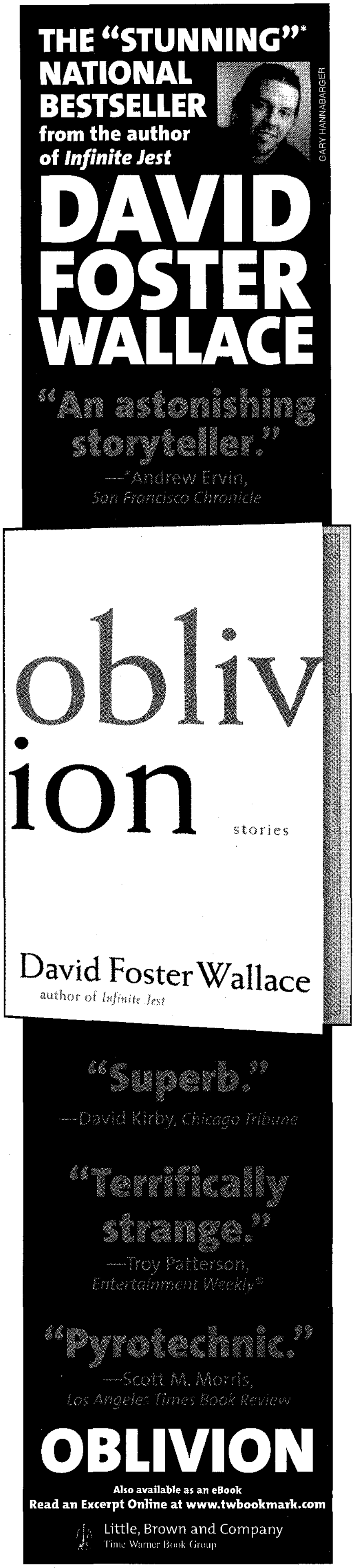
"These people are impressed with the madrassas," Khalid said. Since the local people fetch water at the religious school, Khalid had chosen to give his tribesmen another option: a secular water source. "What will the need be of the madrassa?" Khalid asked, pointing to the scrolls and frills that edged the roofline of the local seminary like frosting on a wedding cake. "It's built only to impress people." In such extreme poverty, the promise of the heavenly palace was mesmerizing. Khalid sniffed in disgust. We'd been driving for two hours, and the heat was making him cranky.

Finally, as cliffs rose on either side of us and we snaked along a narrow, flesh-colored canyon, we took a sharp turn in the road and came upon Sin Tanga: several clusters of five or six low-slung mud houses set into the crook of the cliff wall. The name means "the place between two hills." Behind a padlocked blue gate stood a broken wheat thresher and a squat mud building. A small door opened in the gate, and a teen-age boy beckoned us in. He must have heard the engine of the car from miles away. This was the school, a ten-by-twenty-foot room, which smelled like straw and sweat. High on the mud walls, someone had chalked stick figures riding in airplanes and buses. They looked like hieroglyphs. The teacher, a man named Asmatullah, seemed surprised to see us. Covered in dust and blinking as if he'd just woken up, he came in quickly behind us. There were no classes that day; Asmatullah lived three and a half hours away from the school, so he held classes only when he could make the journey, and sometimes not even then. We were in luck to find him hanging around. There was no water and no electricity. For an outlying community of roughly sixteen hundred children, Asmatullah said, this was the only secular school; the local madrassa opposed his more liberal interpretation of Islam. He taught about a hundred children—boys between the ages of four and fifteen, girls up to the age of eight. After the age of eight, girls generally stay at home.

Malik Tawiz Khan had made his point: the school needed funding. But Khalid didn't promise any further aid. "My breath is stopping here—in this dirty place," he said. "How can people learn here?"

He wanted to get moving; the longer we stayed, the more likely it was that other tribesmen would hear of our visit and discover an American in their midst. Khalid pulled a pair of sunglasses from his pocket, went outside, and opened the car door. As we left the village, we passed a teen-age boy carrying an AK-47 in one hand and a bouquet of yellow flowers in the other. The boy smiled. We slowed down. He handed the bouquet through the window to Khalid, who held it to his nose and seemed pleased.

We stopped in the village of Rajikhel for a late lunch, and filed into a high-ceilinged room in the chowk, a crossroads where men gather. (Owing to the presence of women, they cannot visit one another's houses.) The room was shadowy and cool, and we blinked in the darkness. A row of pink plastic roses, carefully potted in copper planters, ran down the center of this men-only chamber. (I was allowed inside in deference to the Khan.) The men flopped onto pink



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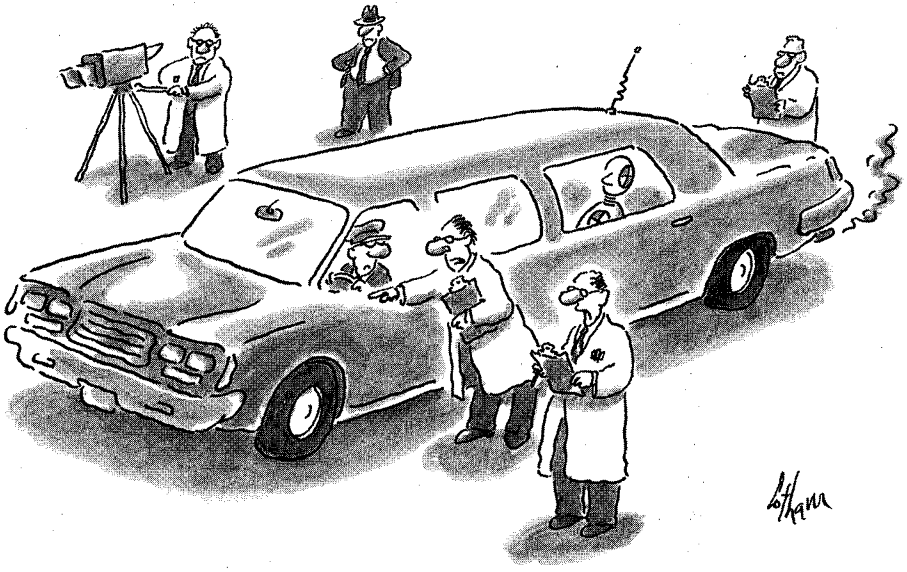

"Now we want you to slam the limo into that wall."

pillows and stretched their legs before them. A young man served us Sprite and asked me questions, saying that he was entering the Pakistani Army in the hope of becoming a United Nations peacekeeper. There was no other job. The men here were fond of Khalid, he said, because a year ago the young man's brother had been kidnapped by a rival tribe while driving. After the brother escaped from his captors, Khalid had helped to negotiate the vehicle's release.

As we spoke, a bucktoothed malik of seventy, with a drawn face and a gray turban, stooped through the door and sat down next to the Khan Bahadur. He was Malik Zenghi Bar Khan, and he had once served as a bodyguard for Khalid's grandfather. Carrying a long staff of blond wood, he crossed his legs Indian style, put his hands on his knees, and looked at Khalid. The men grew quiet. It was clear that their elder was waiting to speak. His complaint concerned the Pakistani government. "They put me in prison," he said.

The other men burst into laughter; the idea of this distinguished old man finding himself in jail amused them. Malik Zenghi Bar Khan stared at Khalid, and went on, "Several weeks ago, I travelled to the office of the political agent"—the government's appointed representative in North Waziristan—"to present a chit for my salary. The political agent threw me into prison because I was from Shawal"—a region straddling the Afghan border, where Osama bin Laden is said to be hiding. A major and a sepoy in the Pakistani Army had recently been killed there by unknown assailants. According to the Frontier Crimes Regulation, a 1901 code of Draconian laws that the tribesmen call "black laws," the political agent has the right to do whatever he wants. Under the law of collective responsibility, he can punish an entire tribe for the actions of one man. After a night in prison, Zenghi Bar Khan exchanged his son, Rizwanullah, who is twenty-two, for himself. The political agent held the young man for a week until the tribesmen agreed to raise a *lashkar*, or posse, of six hundred men, to go from house to house in Shawal and check for Al Qaeda members. The *lashkar*, like dozens of other efforts the government had made at strong-arming the tribesmen into policing themselves, was useless. Zenghi Bar Khan was outraged that he, a former soldier, had been punished for someone else's crimes. Besides, there was no proof that the tribesmen were even responsible for the murders.

Khalid poked the old man in the ribs. "You went to the political agent without my permission," he said, laughing again, rather than addressing the government's right to arrest an old man and his son. "If you go on your own, it's your responsibility."

As Khalid sucked the marrow from a chicken bone, Zenghi Bar Khan said firmly, "Your grandfather would have gone to the political agent directly."

The revival of radical Islam in Waziristan is relatively recent. At the time of Partition, in 1947, the Pashtuns, deeply unhappy about being part of Pakistan, argued for their own independent "Pukhtunistan." The effort, which was supported by both Gandhi and Nehru, was largely secular. "The most important change is that the tribal areas used to be Pashtun nationalists," Husain Haqqani, of the Carnegie Endowment, told me. "The change that has taken place since the nineteen-eighties is that they see themselves as Muslim and Pashtun."

After the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, in 1979, the convenient myth of the "uncontrollable" nature of the tribal belt gave the Pakistani ruler General Zia ul-Haq the cover he needed to wage jihad against the Soviets from bases there. Zia was the first of Pakistan's leaders to adopt Islam in an effort to legitimatize his military rule. Soon, with the help of Pakistan's intelligence network, the C.I.A. was funnelling millions of dollars and weapons through the tribal areas. The region became a hothouse in which to grow radical Islam, sustained by a network of Saudi-funded madrassas that taught Deobandism, which calls for the rejection of modernity. In the late eighties, after the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan, the United States, too, abandoned the region. The results were dramatic. Most Wazirs have bitter stories about the sudden disappearance of international aid. Khalid's aunt Maryam Bibi, who was working in Afghan refugee camps at the time, said that within a few years many schools had closed down for lack of funding. "This gave birth to such extreme things," she told me. "All these mosques were going up, but our people were so powerless and the mosques did nothing for them."

The Saudi-funded madrassas remained. Now there are at least three thousand madrassas registered in the North-West Frontier Province and thousands more unregistered. Much of Afghanistan's Taliban regime was educated in these seminaries. Only a minority of the madrassas preach a radical form of Islam, but some of the most radical are in the tribal areas.

One reason that Pakistan welcomed

the Taliban's religious movement was that it worked against secular Pashtun nationalism, which, because of the country's long-standing rivalry with Afghanistan, was viewed as the greater danger. Waziristan was caught in the middle. "In the tribal areas, politics has been banned for almost fifty years. It's a no-go area for normal electoral patterns," Aqil Shah, a political analyst in Washington, said. "In this way, it's probably a more sophisticated manifestation of the Raj." Until 1997, only the maliks could vote. In the absence of self-representation, the Wazirs effectively had no rights, and the fundamentalists stepped in to fill the vacuum.

In October, 2002, for the first time in more than fifty years, an exclusively Islamist government took power in the North-West Frontier Province. The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, a six-party Islamist alliance, was elected on an anti-American platform. Yet the rise of the Islamist alliance was fuelled not only by popular support but also by Islamabad's manipulation of political power. President Musharraf has used Islamists to strengthen Pakistan's bid for Kashmir and to weaken his secular opponents. The result is that he has effectively insured that he is the only secular solution for Pakistan. It's a strategy that Husain Haqqani calls "*après moi les Islamistes.*" In Waziristan, the alliance between the Pakistani military and the Taliban regime makes it difficult to pursue those harboring Al Qaeda members. The resurgence of the Taliban in the region also serves the Pakistani military, which tends to view the Taliban leaders and other fundamentalists as strategic assets in Afghanistan.

In March, Musharraf held a tribal jirga, attended by Khalid, at which the President assured the tribesmen that no military operations would take place without their consent. Within hours, the military launched an attack near Wana, announcing to the world that it had cornered a "high-value target" in South Waziristan. Some officers identified the target as Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's second-in-command, but this claim was quickly disputed. A twelve-day battle ensued between Islamic militants and Pakistani troops, and the Pakistani military was surprised by the fierce resistance. It turned out that the "high-value target" was probably Tahir Yuldashev, the head of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. He escaped, along with hundreds of his followers. The campaign was widely considered a debacle.

Two weeks later, three Wazir men—a father and his two sons, all of whom had fought for the United States against the Soviets—drove me through a rubble-strewn village near Wana named Kaloosha. The most talkative of the group was the younger of the sons, a thirty-three-year-old in a Chitrali cap who was a construction worker in Dubai. He gave me a full reënactment, with sound effects, of a pitched battle that had recently taken place. His older brother and his white-haired father, one eye opaque with cataracts, nodded and said little. The men were members of a subtribe of the Wazirs which the Pakistani Army has punished vigorously for harboring Al Qaeda. The Army had just withdrawn after destroying eighty-three of their homes, and had imposed a two-day deadline for surrender. As we drove around, the mud structures looked as if a giant had smashed them with his fist. In the midst of the destruction, a field of violet poppies was in bloom. It was early evening, and the light made the petals translucent.

The now homeless tribesmen sat by the roadside and waved listlessly as we drove past. My host pointed to a small white tent across a muddy field. "We must turn around," he said. The tent belonged to a Pakistani Talib named Mohammed Sharif, a leader of the resistance to Pakistan's incursions who was now on the country's most-wanted list. "If Sharif sees us, he'll ask us in for tea," he said. Tea could pose a problem: my presence would be misunderstood, at the very least. My host, who told me he'd seen Americans in a camp nearby, said that most tribesmen believed that all Westerners were spies and in league with their newfound enemy, the Pakistani government. If it weren't for the Taliban, he said, and the help of bin Laden after the Americans pulled out of Afghanistan, in the late eighties, the Pashtuns would be finished now.

I asked him why he wasn't fighting with his fellow-tribesmen against the Pakistani Army, and, by proxy, against the United States.

It wasn't worth it, he said. At least, not yet. Although his family had been terrorized by the operation, he would rather go back to Dubai to make money

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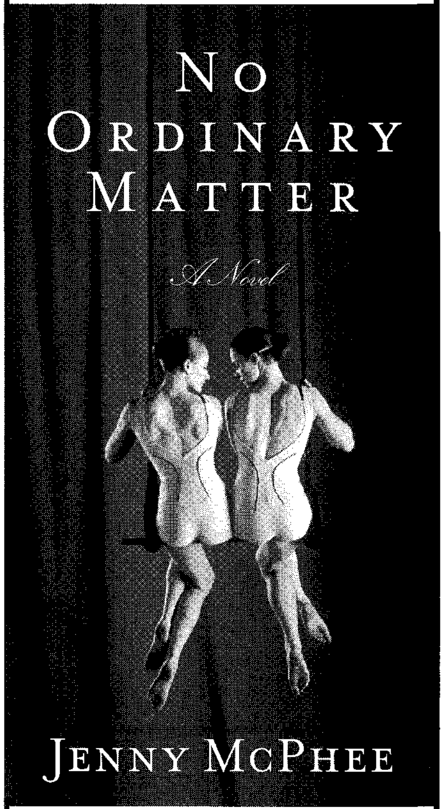

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for them. Another reason for his ambivalence was the fact that the Pakistani soldiers are fellow-Muslims.

We returned to my host's mud compound. In the courtyard, a crop of green shoots had yet to bloom. I peered into the gathering darkness and asked if he was growing cabbage. He looked at me. "Poppy," he said. "Here, you won't find one man in a hundred thousand who smokes." He meant that since heroin is for export to non-Muslims the fact that its growth is *haram*, or forbidden, can be overlooked. The hard-liners will tell you that if their crop kills one non-Muslim the drug has done its job. But my host just wanted the money. We sat in his large *hujra*, or reception room; the walls were lined in pink and green velour. Under a cloth embroidered with red poppies, my host kept a television, but, he said, he never turned it on. There is rarely any electricity, and he can't afford a generator. The Pakistani government pumps billions of rupees' worth of electricity into the tribal area each year, but the tribesmen are reluctant to pay for it and try to pirate it instead, so the government turns it off frequently. Villages have gone to war with each other over access to pirated lines. (Khalid says this pirated electricity is one more example of the Wazirs' religious hypocrisy: "They wash their faces to pray, but they have no qualms about stealing power.")

Two tribesmen appeared in the doorway. One, with curly bobbed hair and a vacant look, sat against a wall. The other, a sombre-looking man, was a local photographer. More than six and a half feet tall, he sat down and sketched a map of the militants' camps that were still operating about ten miles away, as well as those which had been flattened several months earlier. Local merchants had been sending vast orders of groceries out to the camps, and the foreigners paid generously, he said. He himself had been rounded up in a Pakistani raid, and later released, after the Army destroyed photographs he had taken of Pashtun Pakistani soldiers raising their hands in the air and refusing to fight fellow-Pashtuns. I asked him about the man sitting against the wall. His arm was in a sling. Apparently, several weeks before, during the operation, he was injured and thirteen members of his family were killed when a Pakistani helicopter gunship mistook them for fleeing jihadis.

We drank tea as curious children collected at the door. My host shooed them away and passed me a china bowl of sugar-coated pistachios. As his brother lit an oversized kerosene lamp, I asked my host if he had seen any Al Qaeda or Taliban militants coming through the area after the recent war in Afghanistan.

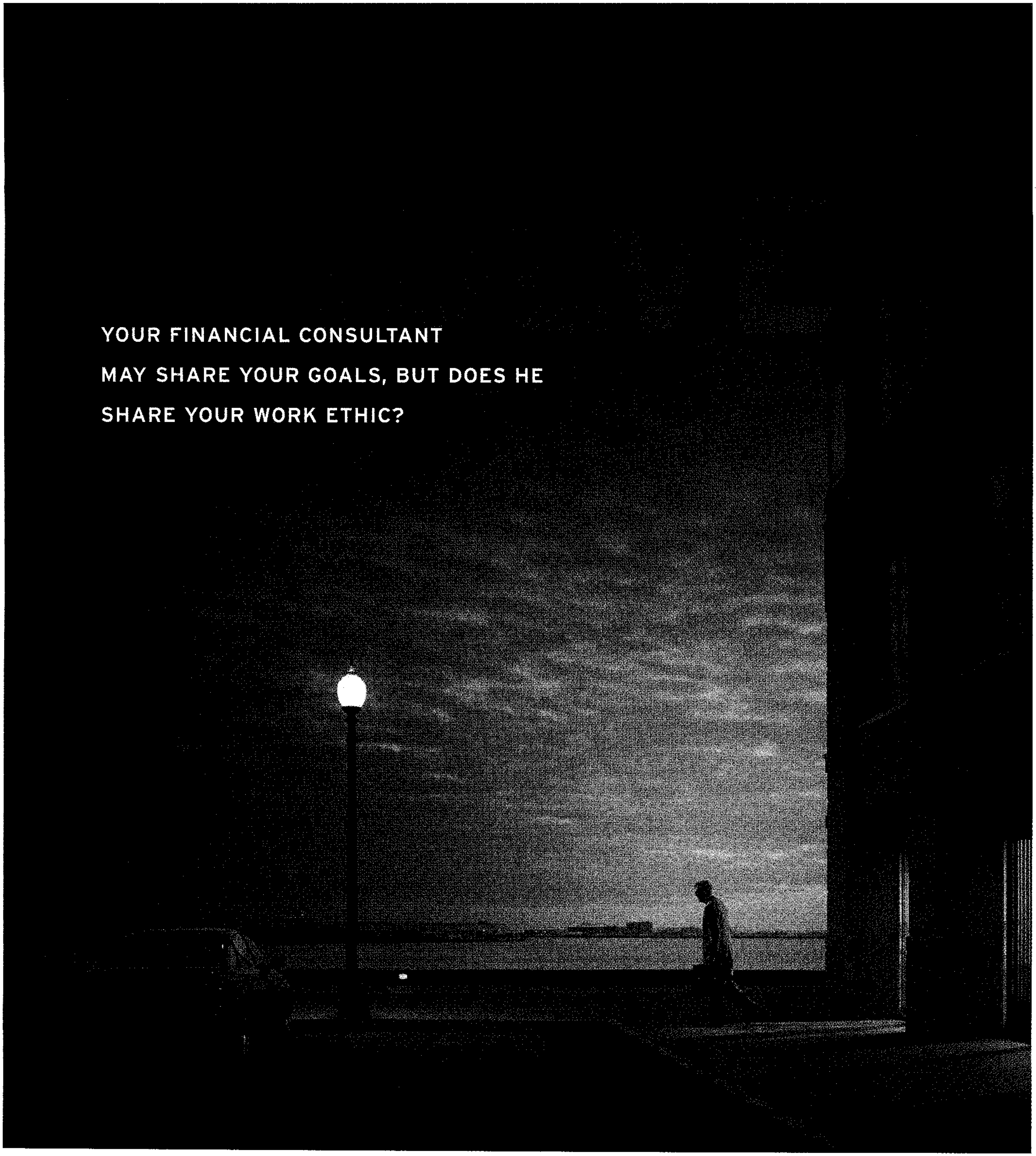
"I am Taliban," he said. "We all are."

In Peshawar, I went to see Lateef Afridi, a sixty-year-old tribal politician. He has wispy white hair and an avian nose, and, when he cocked his head to listen, I was reminded of a peregrine falcon. As he spoke, he slipped his feet in and out of plastic slippers. Afridi, a former member of Pakistan's National Assembly, decided not to run in the last election, he said. His grandson wandered into the room, climbed into his lap, and fell asleep. Afridi said that he wanted no part in the elections once he saw that the Pakistani government was setting the stage for the region's current fundamentalist government to win. "The I.S.I."—Pakistan's intelligence service—"planned that these religious people would take power along the border," he said, absent-mindedly patting the top of his grandson's head. The fundamentalist presence along the Afghan border served the government's purpose, he said. Because of the threat the fundamentalists posed, the United States would give Pakistan whatever it wanted. The Americans also wouldn't dare come after bin Laden. Yet, he went on, in the tribal areas the I.S.I.'s old links with the fundamentalists had been strained. "The I.S.I. is facing the very people it groomed and protected," he said.

Afridi's daughter-in-law, a schoolteacher, came into the room with a bowl of quartered sugar melons that were the same shade of green as sea glass. She spooned the fruit onto two small plates while Afridi spoke of the catastrophic failure of the Pakistani Army's operations in Waziristan. "In Wana, fear of and respect for the Pakistani Army have vanished," he said. "The Army was the one organization that was respected."

Also, he said, the romanticized notion of *pashtunwali*, or tribal code, which meant that Pashtuns would die for any stranger at their gate, was naïve. The code is intended to protect the weakest members within the tribe. For outsiders, the laws of *panah* (refuge) and *melmastia* (hospitality) have their limits. "As far as a foreigner is concerned," he said, "if he takes refuge in my house and has enemies, then it doesn't apply." He went on, "Al Qaeda among us is not about refuge. If anyone is going to be the cause of war for me, then his moral obligation is to leave." Also, he said, Al Qaeda was paying local tribesmen inflated prices for food and shelter, and to help mount cross-border raids in Afghanistan. "This is earning, not *pashtunwali*," he said. In the tribal areas, where there is no other employment to speak of, the influx of the militants' money was just one more means by which they gained influence. "We can't resist money," he said.

On my last trip into Waziristan, I visited Shawal, the most isolated and conservative area, which had just been targeted as the likeliest hideout of Osama bin Laden. Driving for six hours into the mountains along the Durand line with a baby-faced local tribesman, I watched the flat pewter of the land around us turn green: the Findhorn of Waziristan. The air blew thin and cold around us. The red road, which the Army had just blasted into the mountainside, was littered with giant pinecones, and monkeys skittered in front of our truck. The Wazirs who lived here, mostly woodcutters, had vehemently opposed the building of the road, my tribal friend said. Two years ago, they had considered all vehicles un-Islamic, including bicycles. As with the Taliban regime, across the border, their understanding of Sharia was heavily influenced by tribal code. All education and any form of modernity were anathema, and still are. The Pakistani Army buzzed the Wazirs with helicopters and warned them that if they did not allow the road to be built American troops would land on their soil, my friend said. Now, reportedly, lumberjacks were being paid to guide Al Qaeda through the mountains. According to local journalists, Osama bin Laden had abandoned his Arab bodyguards in



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favor of Wazirs, who to a Predator drone camera would appear simply as woodcutters and shepherds.

We passed a three-story structure built against a cliff. It had a wooden roof, and smoke came from its courtyard, but, except for a ring of axes against distant pine trees, there was no sign of human activity. The tribesmen were chopping down the trees as fast as they could, to hoard them, my friend said, in case the Army tried to steal the wood when it arrived. They had no idea what to expect from outsiders.

Eventually, we passed two old women carrying enormous bundles of wood on their heads. They stared at us. We stopped the truck. The women, chuckling, climbed into its bed. As we made our way back down the mountain, they shrieked at every lurch. "They've never ridden in a vehicle before," my friend said, looking in the rearview mirror. On either side of us, the mountain was now a mass of stumps, in the middle of which power grids glinted in the sun, the wires for carrying current not yet hung between them. Finally, the women wanted to get down. We'd driven at least ten miles.

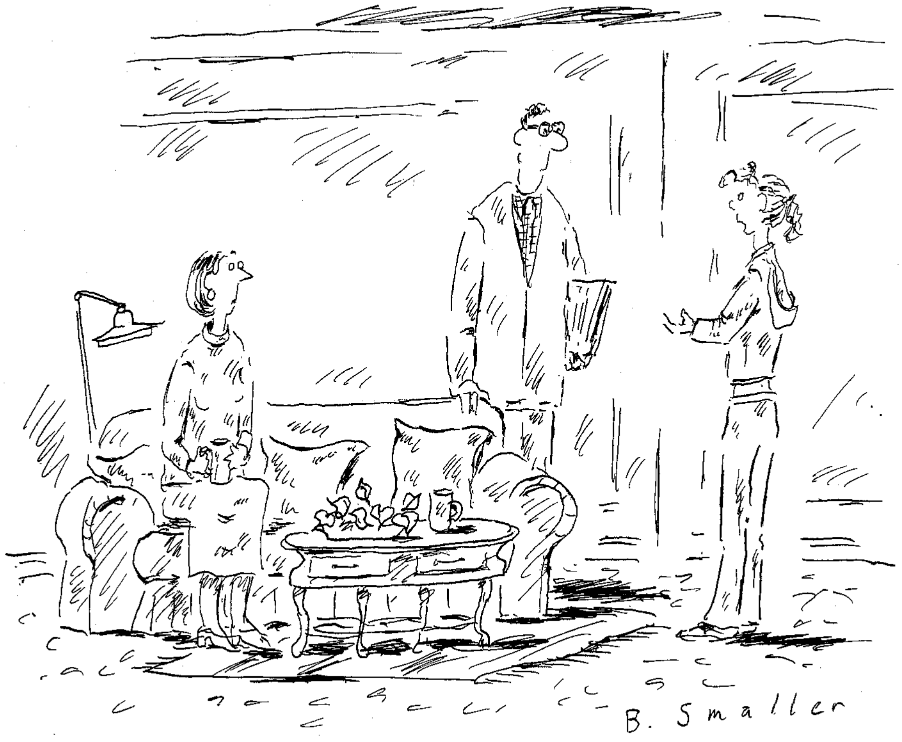
On our way back, we hit a straightaway of new macadam, near the Army post at Razmak. Workmen laying the tar stood by their new road and watched as a convoy of Pakistani tanks and Army trucks passed by. The soldiers looked down at us while we waited. They were wearing goggles. Above, perched on a cliff, was a massive fort that the British had built at the highest point they could find: Alexander Fort. Watching the convoy go by was like watching history repeat itself: the Army swarming over inhospitable land to battle an invisible enemy among the tribesmen, who grew increasingly enraged.

A hundred miles away, Khalid's grandfather, the first Khan Bahadur, is buried behind the village of Janikhel. His grave—a collection of blanched stones—looks like every other one of the thousand or so plots in the barren wasteland. "In Islam, we don't make graves with bricks, because it will take too much land," Khalid said one day when we visited. "After fifty, sixty years, the grave should be gone." That day, he pointed to a stand of anemic acacia trees and made another pitch for his schools. "See how these trees are without fruit?" he said. "The people are like this. We say their minds are dry. You make this area very green, and everything will be O.K."

Khalid wouldn't let me spend much time in the graveyard. Bandits and killers are sometimes exiled here. Also, around his village, the Islamist presence has become aggressive, as the leaders feel more threatened by the influx of secular development. Khalid's aunt Maryam Bibi, a thickset woman in her fifties with deep lines under her eyes, thinks that her nephew hasn't been forceful enough as Khan Bahadur. "He's enjoying the authority without the wisdom," she said, but she thought he'd grow into the job. Also, she said, any inherited authority—including her family's—has its limits.

As a woman, Maryam Bibi has challenged both Pashtun and Islamic strictures. When she was in her twenties, she was forced to marry a cousin who was a schizophrenic. Although he beat her, Maryam had to stay with him. Clandestinely, she tried to start a variety of small businesses from home: buying a rickshaw for someone else to drive; selling buffalo milk. Finally, Maryam was allowed to take a job outside the house with a women's organization. Today, with foreign funding, she runs a non-governmental organization of her own, Sister's Home, which since 1993 has enrolled seven thousand girls in eighty new schools. "Information is a huge part of power dynamics," she told me. But some politicized religious leaders in her native village called her "un-Islamic." At one heated meeting, she shouted at them, "Who says who is a good Muslim? If I gave out visas, each of you would go to America!" In response, they have banned her work. Last year, when she attempted to build a school, she was driven away by fifty armed Talibs.

Recently, when the people of a nearby village asked Maryam for help in establishing a school, she hired a young Wazir girl, Bushra, whose parents were very poor and welcomed the idea. Bushra went to Lahore for training. But when she tried to reënter the tribal area, a few weeks ago, a group of armed men blocked the road. Bushra told the driver to keep going. If she were taken hostage, even for a night, she said, her honor would be ruined. As the car sped on, the men fired their weapons, wounding both Bushra and the driver, but they got away. Maryam Bibi is sickened by the incident. "People say that we were trying to work in the most dangerous area," she said. "But this is my village, and we've been doing this work for over a decade. The reality is you *have* to work in the most remote areas—you *have* to spend your life there—or all of your political statements mean nothing." ♦



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LETTER FROM SOUTH BOSTON

THE OUTSIDERS

Reinventing a part of town that people thought would never change.

BY SUSAN ORLEAN

The Church of Saints Peter and Paul in South Boston has had its share of both bedevilment and blessings. A grand gray building, a pile of granite chunks pierced by Gothic arches and topped with a copper-clad bell tower, was erected in 1844 and dedicated with extravagant ceremony; four years later, it burned to the ground. After it was rebuilt, it was so popular that another parish had to be established nearby to handle the overflow. But in time South Boston started to empty—slowly at first, and then like a bathtub with an open drain—and Saints Peter and Paul emptied, too. On New Year's Day, 1996, the Boston Archdiocese desanctified the most eminent Catholic church in the area and shut it down. But last spring Saints Peter and Paul was reborn once more. Cleaned up and cleared out, with additional windows cut through its three-foot-thick walls and the new, secular name of 45 West Broadway, it went on the market as thirty-six luxury condominiums suspended in the building's soaring open space.

The church is not the only thing in South Boston that is experiencing a resurrection. Across West Broadway, a ratty gangster bar—for years the South Boston mob boss Whitey Bulger's favorite place for a cold drink—reopened a few months ago as a polished-wood-and-granite sports café. Now, instead of being known as a convenient drop-off spot for dead bodies, the bar is known as the 6 House, which is the nickname for the local police precinct, and among its customers are scrubbed and well-shaved managers from the Gillette Corporation, whose offices are a few blocks away. Next door to the 6 House, a former Irish bakery has risen again as a sushi bar. Not far away, the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center—the largest building ever erected in New England—opened last June on what had been sixty acres of cracked blacktop and obsolete factories. All of South Boston is bristling with construction cranes, growling with backhoes, stickered with for-sale signs and building permits. Up and down Broadway, weary old stores are emptying out and being renewed.

All of Boston, in fact, is as hale as it has been in decades—its economy fit, its residential areas sprucing up, its eternal traffic mess finally straightening out—just in time for its spotlight moment this month as host of the Democratic National Convention. Thomas Menino, the mayor of Boston, made sure that the state delegations' welcoming parties would be held in an array of neighborhoods around the city, to show off how much they have improved. He was reportedly most excited about the venue for the New York party: Carson Beach, beside the old L Street Bath House, in South Boston. The churn of gentrification in old city neighborhoods is not a novel story, and recently gentrification has arrived, for better or for worse, in neighborhoods no one would ever have expected to revive—Washington's Capitol Hill, Brooklyn's Williamsburg. But it is an especially surprising turn in South Boston, a place that had always seemed cut off from the cycle of city life, and whose character was, for a century or so, rooted in a mighty, and sometimes violent, resistance to change.

One recent afternoon, I met up with Patrick Lynch, a blond, bright-eyed man who is one of the three brokers for the church condominium project. Lynch was showing Saints Peter and Paul to a lawyer who lived in downtown Boston but was considering a move. Lynch grew up in the housing projects near the church, and his sister was married and his nephew christened there. So far, he and the two other brokers have sold twenty-eight of the church's thirty-six condos, along with all the apartments in the church's

Recognize these letters?

WORD CRAFT

[answers below]

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rectory, next door, which was converted to condominiums last year.

The lawyer was taken with Penthouse 3, a one-bedroom with a stained-glass window depicting St. Gregory. The asking price was $799,000. "Breathtaking," the lawyer said. "This is worthy of any of the Red Sox. I could see someone like, say, Nomar Garciaparra and his soccer-playing wife in here, couldn't you?"

Lynch said he could, and, after a moment, led us past St. Gregory and into Penthouse 1, the biggest unit, which has exclusive access to the bell tower. We climbed up to see the view from the tower windows. Seagulls floated past with an eye toward an errant bag of trash on the street below. In the distance, a huge silent boat slid by in the harbor. "This place is the hot thing," the lawyer said. "I have to tell you, until now South Boston wasn't even on my radar." He said that he was originally from Washington, D.C., but had lived in Boston for many years—long enough to know South Boston's reputation for clannishness and impenetrability, and to remember its past as the epicenter of resistance to busing. That uprising took place almost thirty years ago, but the image it created for the neighborhood has abided. In fact, when the location of the New York delegation's party was announced, Herman Farrell, the head of the delegation, objected because of the neighborhood's "history of racial turmoil and tension."

"Oh, I know, I know," the lawyer said. "But the attraction now is, one, proximity to the subway; two, proximity to downtown; three, value. That's what's on my mind."

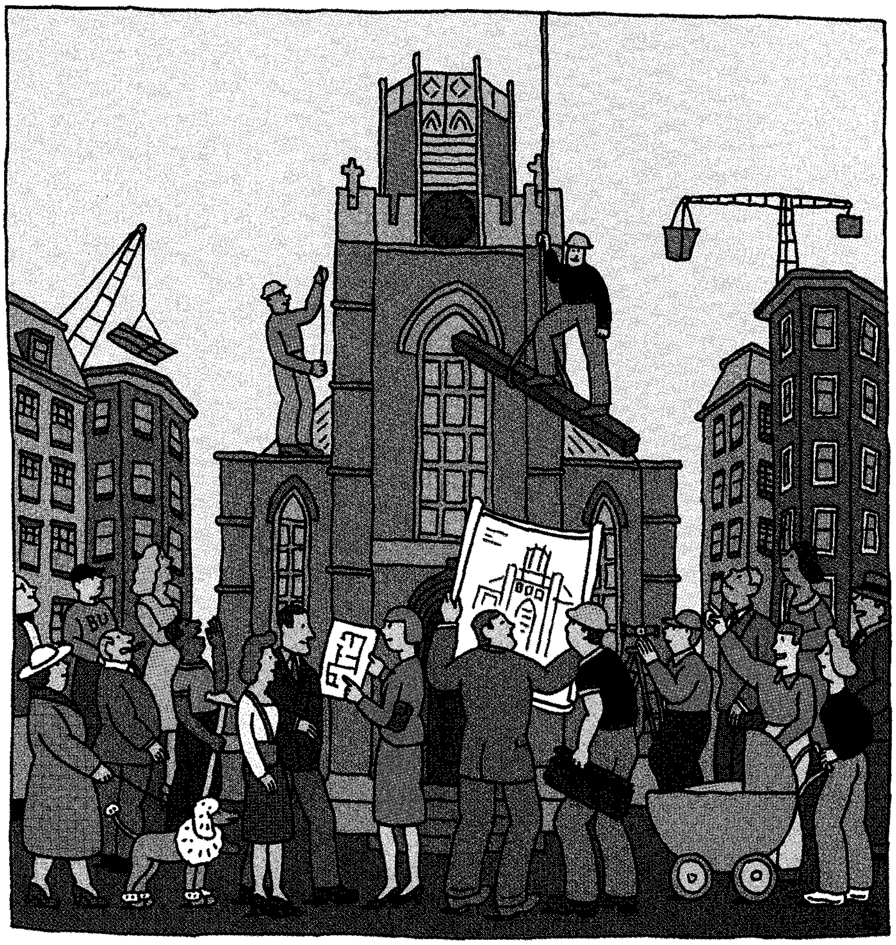
"We're getting a lot of people looking who've never been in the neighborhood before," Lynch said.

"By the way, what's with the for-sale sign on the building next door?" the lawyer asked, pointing to the rectory. Lynch explained that a South Boston native who owned the unit was being transferred to California.

"Well, he's an idiot for selling," the lawyer said. "Things here are going to go nowhere but sky-high."

South Boston is the peninsular thumb of the Greater Boston mitten, just a few hundred yards from the center of downtown but cut off by the murky water of Fort Point Channel and a crosshatch of rail yards. Broadway is the bone that runs through it east to west. North of Broadway, there are the dark brick carcasses of extinct businesses, a hodgepodge of stores and services, plain triple-decker houses shoulder to shoulder on small streets, and a thousand empty acres of developable waterfront property, punctuated by the seaport projects, including the Federal Courthouse, the World Trade Center, and several glossy new office buildings that look as though they'd got lost on their way downtown. On the east end of the peninsula, where the harbor widens, there are leafy residential streets leading down to a beach.

Boats in Boston Harbor skirt the neighborhood; airplanes coming in and out of the city fly over it; any tall building in the financial district casts a shadow across it—still, getting to South Boston had always seemed like a chore. According to Thomas O'Connor's "South Boston: My Hometown," when the city was first settled, people made their way to South Boston in rowboats, if they made their way here at all. A toll bridge was opened in 1805, but few people used it; it wasn't until a free overpass was built to the neighborhood, in 1826, that South Boston started to grow. With water on three sides, it attracted heavy industry; iron foundries, locomotive factories, glassworks, shipyards, and sugar refineries opened on the flatland near the harbor, and workers moved into wooden housing that popped up at the foot of the peninsula's steep green hills. By the mid-eighteen-fifties, South Boston had sixteen thousand residents, most of whom were new Irish immigrants.



Even at its worst, Southie was a romantic place—a sort of evocation of a small town.

SEYMOUR CHWAST

This happened to be at the peak of anti-Irish sentiment in Boston, a bitter period when the old Yankee establishment tried to repulse the wave—thousands each year—of Irish immigrants, and, failing that, to make life in Boston as uncomfortable and unwelcoming as possible by restricting which jobs, housing, and services the Irish could apply for. South Boston, which was absorbing many of the immigrants, felt the brunt of the hostility; residents suspected that the fire that destroyed the Church of

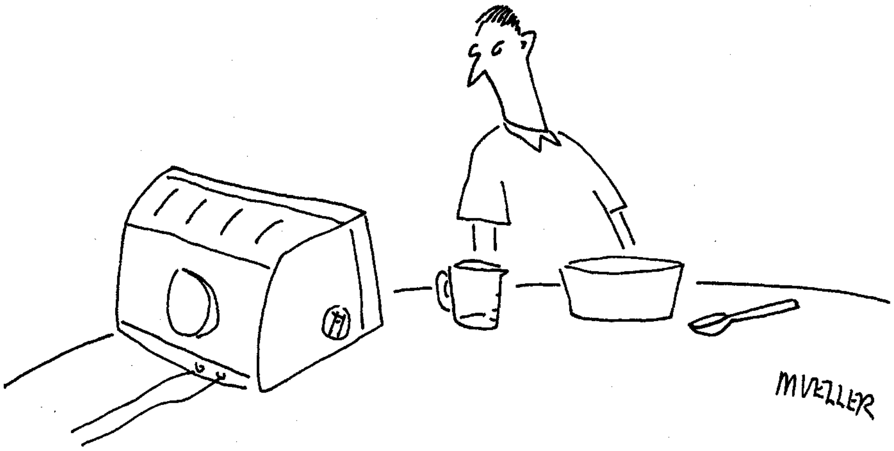
Saints Peter and Paul was set by anti-Catholic arsonists, or, at the very least, that it burned unattended for hours because of deliberate neglect. So the neighborhood turned inward. When heavy industry sputtered out in South Boston, people took jobs in the neighborhood with the city and the public utilities. There was a self-containment and insularity to South Boston that was pronounced even by Boston standards—that is, even considering that Boston was, and is, an unusually fragmented city composed, in a sense, of fiercely separate little towns like Brighton, Dorchester, Roxbury, and Charlestown. This separateness was intensified by the fact that South Boston was so physically isolated. Because it is a peninsula jutting out into the harbor, pointing away from the rest of the city and toward, say, Ireland, you didn't pass through it on your way anywhere, and so the only people who came to South Boston were the people who lived here. In 1959, the elevated Central Artery—a massive contraption that, running parallel to Fort Point Channel and the rail yards, carried the interstate over downtown—added one more barrier between South Boston and the rest of the city.

What balanced out the narrow opportunities of the neighborhood was a vivid sense of community and a defiant pride. Those were the qualities that, in spite of the meanness of life here, made it, according to the writer Michael Patrick MacDonald, in his harrowing memoir, "All Souls," "the best place in the world." South Boston was ever more homogeneous—by the nineteen-fifties it had a population of nearly sixty thousand people, who were overwhelmingly Irish, Catholic, and working class. For diversion, there was the church and the local schools: every parish had sports teams and theatre groups and social clubs, and the crowds at South Boston High School football games often numbered ten thousand people or more. The neighborhood voted together, and with determination: it is said that if you were from South Boston the first thing you did when you came of age was register as a Democrat. South Boston has long had one of the highest voter turnouts in the city and a disproportionate presence in Massachusetts politics—including, at one point in recent years, Ray Flynn, the mayor of Boston; William Bulger, the president of the state senate; and the late John Joseph Moakley, the area's longtime congressional representative and the head of the House Rules Committee.

That same home-town loyalty had an extralegal upshot as well. South Boston produced its own mob, headed by James (Whitey) Bulger—William Bulger's brother. Whitey Bulger, who has been a fugitive since 1995, when he was indicted on federal racketeering charges, was well known to be a murderer (nineteen victims, at last count), an extortionist (he used intimidation to control a score of South Boston businesses), and a drug trafficker (he profited from the easy flow of heroin into the area). Nevertheless, he was esteemed in the neighborhood as something of a gentleman and, more important—as the countless residents who refused to inform on the Bulger gang explained—one of their own. Even at its worst, and certainly at its best, South Boston was a romantic place—a sort of sentimental evocation of a small town, with its own rules, its tortured intimacies, its layered loyalties. It was a complete world, to which the rest of Boston was just a satellite. Much of the time its residents didn't even call it South Boston or Southie; they referred to it simply as "the Town."

Now, with change galloping through the neighborhood, you are still aware of the character of the Town. There are so many local civic organizations that they are listed in a book; so many neighborhood fund-raisers each week for widows and sick children that one South Boston resident told me he hardly had a night at home. One recent afternoon, I walked up and down West Broadway with Brian Wallace, the Democratic state representative for the Fourth Suffolk District, which comprises South Boston and a chunk of nearby Dorchester. Wallace is small, round, smart, and cheery. He likes to say that he started in politics at the age of six, handing out leaflets for John Powers's state-senate campaign; when I asked him if he grew up in the neighborhood, he chuckled and said, "Do you think I could be in politics in South Boston if I hadn't?" Walking around with him is an unhurried affair. Every few yards, he sees someone he wants to talk to: the head of the local redevelopment authority, then the guy who dresses up as the Revolutionary War figure at South Boston's Fort Independence, and then a stream of constituents, grammar-school classmates, business associates, friends. Everyone was on a nickname basis—nicknames being a Southie tradition, an inside joke that distinguishes someone who was raised in the Town from someone who just stumbled in the other day. A few years ago, Wallace compiled a list of several hundred local nicknames for a huge neighborhood celebration, the 2000 Great Southie Reunion: Wing Nut Coyne, Mousey Feeney, Pinhead Richardson, Squarehead Lydon, Beefy Boyle, Porky Welch.

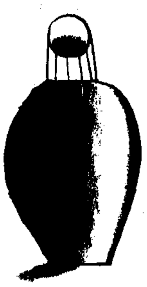
It was a hot day, and the little grease slicks on West Broadway were shimmering in the midday light; we ducked into the shade of a doorway whenever Wallace stopped for a chat. Each doorway reminded him of what the business there used to be: he said the employment office had been a bookie joint; the Quiet Man Pub had been the Royale Café, a popular spot with kids from the



"Today you're going to bitch-slap some veal."

Old Colony housing project; the raw gray dirt of a vacant lot being readied for construction was where the West Broadway projects had been. Wallace added that things were changing so fast in the neighborhood that he found it hard to believe. What had once been a town so intimate that everyone knew everyone, could talk to each other about Porky and Beefy and Pinhead, was becoming just a place—a nicer place, but just a place, populated by strangers. He mentioned that he always consulted voter lists from previous elections when he campaigned, but that when he ran for office in 2002 the lists from the last two elections were of no use to him, because so many of those voters had moved. In a place like South Boston, that kind of shift is seismic. “I always hand out leaflets at bus stops,” Wallace said. “So for this campaign I went to the stop at L and Fourth Street—that’s a big stop. I went early in the morning and gave out a hundred and three brochures. I knew only three out of the hundred and three people. Four years earlier, I would have known a hundred out of the hundred and three.”

It is easy to pinpoint the moment when South Boston began to change: it was June 21, 1974, when Judge W. Arthur Garrity ruled that the Boston school system displayed “segregative intent.” He prescribed a busing plan for the entire city, but he had a particular interest in South Boston, which was ninety-nine per cent white. The busing plan called for African-American students from nearby Roxbury to be brought to Southie, and for South Boston students to be sent in the other direction. Much as residents might be nostalgic about the era preceding Judge Garrity’s order, South Boston in the mid-seventies was a downcast place—economically inert and socially stagnant, a place where mobsters and drug dealers had taken a ferocious hold. A 1965 study by the Boston Redevelopment Authority reported that nearly half of the neighborhood’s housing was in bad shape and recommended that twenty-two per cent of it be torn down. Most of the local school buildings had been erected before the turn of the century; the report called for six of the fourteen to be demolished immediately. At the time, Boston was in the midst of an urban-renewal binge, ripping down strip-club districts and slums and slapping up glassy plazas and municipal towers in the hope of refreshing downtown. Many of those projects were misbegotten and badly designed. That might have been why South Boston’s residents resisted the proposed renewal plan, or their resistance might have been more a function of the neighborhood’s increasing stubbornness and rejection of change. And then came busing, which combined every provocation to the neighborhood’s character: a plan imposed by outsiders, and bringing scores of outsiders into one of South Boston’s bedrock institutions, its schools.

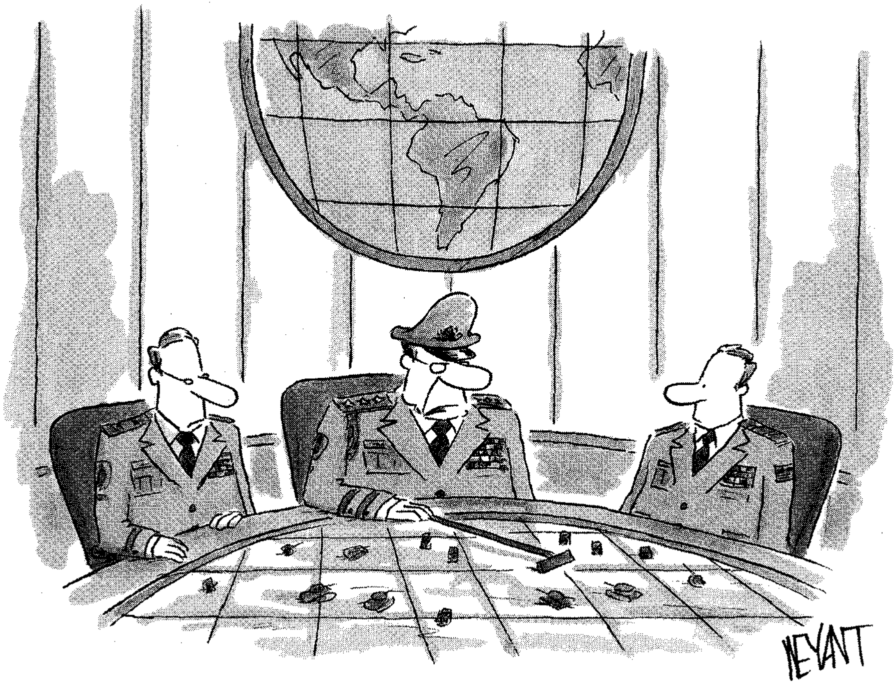


The result was bruising and hysterical: In South Boston, crowds met the school buses from Roxbury, picketing, chanting, throwing rocks. There was a stabbing at the school; an infamous incident in which a South Boston teen-ager lunged at an African-American man with an American flag; and rumors that South Boston gangs were supplying local teen-agers with guns to attack the Roxbury students. As J. Anthony Lukas noted in “Common Ground,” his Pulitzer Prize-winning account of Boston’s busing crisis, the scene was as inflamed and hostile as the one that had met the first school integration, nearly twenty years earlier, in Little Rock.

Besides the conflict between blacks and whites, busing also represented, for many in South Boston, a conflict between those Irish who had remained loyal to their roots and those who had become “Yankeefied.” Both Judge Garrity and the then mayor of Boston, Kevin White, who reluctantly supported the busing decision, were Irish, which made the imposition all that much harder to take.

It was years before South Boston schools were quieted. At some point, the energy for stoning buses faded and the inevitability of the court order took hold. Many people came to accept integration, but many others resolved their distaste for it by moving their kids to parochial schools—and many just left the neighborhood. This happened throughout the city: during the period of Judge Garrity’s supervision, the number of white students in Boston’s public schools dropped from forty-five thousand in 1974 to 15,842 in 1987. But South Boston’s exodus was the most dramatic. Its residents moved out of the Town, the place they had probably intended to stay in forever, and into the suburbs south of Boston, such as Quincy, Weymouth, Holbrook, Brockton. The population of South Boston declined by twenty per cent.

It was during the busing upheaval that the future of South Boston was probably cast. In 1976, just two years after Garrity’s decision, the Tall Ships made their way past Boston, and the best place to view them was South Boston’s Castle Island, a green park on the harbor. It must have been a shock to visitors from other parts of the city to be in this sequestered neighborhood, mostly unseen and unknown, and assumed to be dingy, forbidding, dour—and to find a splendid park and three miles of beach, lined by pretty houses with picture windows, all an easy distance from downtown. Then in quick succession came a hat trick of projects that further changed South Boston. First, in 1985, there was a federal court order to clean up Boston Harbor; fifteen years later, the harbor was clean, and the neighborhood with the most access to it was South Boston. Two years after the harbor restoration was ordered, Congress approved funding for the largest and most complex public-works project in the country: the Big Dig, which would dismantle the Central Artery and replace it with a huge underground highway, thus removing one of the ugliest and most intrusive hurdles between South Boston and downtown. (The project is now in its final stages.) In addition, the Massachusetts Turnpike was extended into the neighborhood, making it possible, for the first time, to travel at high speed from South Boston to the rest of the world. Finally, in 1997 the state approved plans to acquire sixty gloomy acres near the harbor and build on it the new convention center—a sleek, white, wave-shaped building that would anchor development of the thousand vacant acres around it. At the same time, word got out that property in South Boston was priced well below that in the rest of the city, where housing was expensive and in short supply; suddenly, crumbling Southie buildings that hadn’t



"Let's run it up the flagpole and see if anyone shoots at it."

had a new owner or a coat of paint in years were being bought and sold. The neighborhood's reinvention had begun.

Walking through South Boston these days is like walking in and out and ahead of time, being able to see what used to be and what is soon likely to be. On one block you might see faded Gaelic graffiti, Aer Lingus ads, and posters declaring "NOW HERE OTTARA'S OF FOXFORD REAL IRISH LOAF BAKED IN IRELAND," and on the next a cluster of sparkling new storefronts and no indication at all of what the area used to be. The old bad things in the neighborhood—the aversion to outsiders, the antagonism to change—are being shaken loose, but some of the best things about the community are slipping away, too. In the past, if you grew up in South Boston you knew that you could afford to stay here. But between 1980 and 1990 the median home value rose from twenty-four thousand dollars to a hundred and forty-one thousand, and has certainly gone up from there; the first million-dollar condominium sale took place earlier this year. The cheapest, sagging triple-deckers now offer developers the delicious prospect of condo conversion, and a lot of lifetime residents, particularly the elderly, are being priced out of their own homes. More alarming is the fact that among young men in the neighborhood, starting in the late nineties, suicide and heroin use soared.

The most recent transformation of South Boston has coincided, almost exactly, with the revelations of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church—a scandal that was first exposed in the Boston Archdiocese. The financial toll on the Church, and the disaffection of many Catholics, in addition to the fact that so many had already left Boston, has diminished what had been an unassailable force in the city. Every day, it seems, another church closes, another parochial school is shut down, another parish folds. There used to be seven major churches in South Boston. For years, there was a tradition in the neighborhood of going to Mass at each of the seven on Holy Thursday, walking from one to the next—what people in the neighborhood called "making the seven churches." Now one of those churches has closed, and two more will soon be closing.

Not long ago, I roamed around South Boston with a newcomer to the neighborhood. Samuel Hurtado, a slim, doe-eyed young man with sharp shoulders and dark hair, moved from Mexico to the United States eight years ago in order to become a priest. He didn't take to the priesthood, so he left the seminary and found a job at an after-school program in South Boston. He had never been in the neighborhood, or the city, before. He decided to work in social services, focussing on Hispanic families in the South Boston projects, which, until 1987, when the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development forced the Boston Housing Authority to integrate them, were almost completely inhabited by whites. Now the projects are more than half Hispanic and African-American. For some people who have been in South Boston forever, this is a case of the vise tightening from the bottom and the top: the fancy houses are being taken over by outsiders, and so are the projects, where nearly every old-school South Boston politician grew up. Hurtado knew that the immigrant community faced resistance, but he liked the challenge. He said that he had read the history of South Boston and realized that it was originally settled by unloved immigrants, who had made it their own exclusive place. He explained that he had grown up in a tight-knit neighborhood in Mexico, and that the dynamics there were just like what he was finding in South Boston—the tradition, the closeness, the wariness of change. "I realized that I understood this place," he said, "and that we were somehow making history."

We stopped at Old Colony, a squat brick project near Carson Beach, on the southern edge of the peninsula. A bunch of kids were whacking a tennis ball with a broom handle, running invisible bases in the dusty courtyard. A husky, red-faced man in a Red Sox uniform stood on the sidelines, shaking his head at each wayward swing of the broom handle. He had just come from a Little League tryout and was lamenting how few kids had turned up. "Years ago, things were different," he said to Hurtado. Then he yelled at the kids, "Hey, that's an error!" He turned back to Hurtado. "Like I said, things were different."

Hurtado smiled. "Everything is always different."

The man let out a beery burp and said, "That's what they say." ♦

HEADLINE OF THE WEEK

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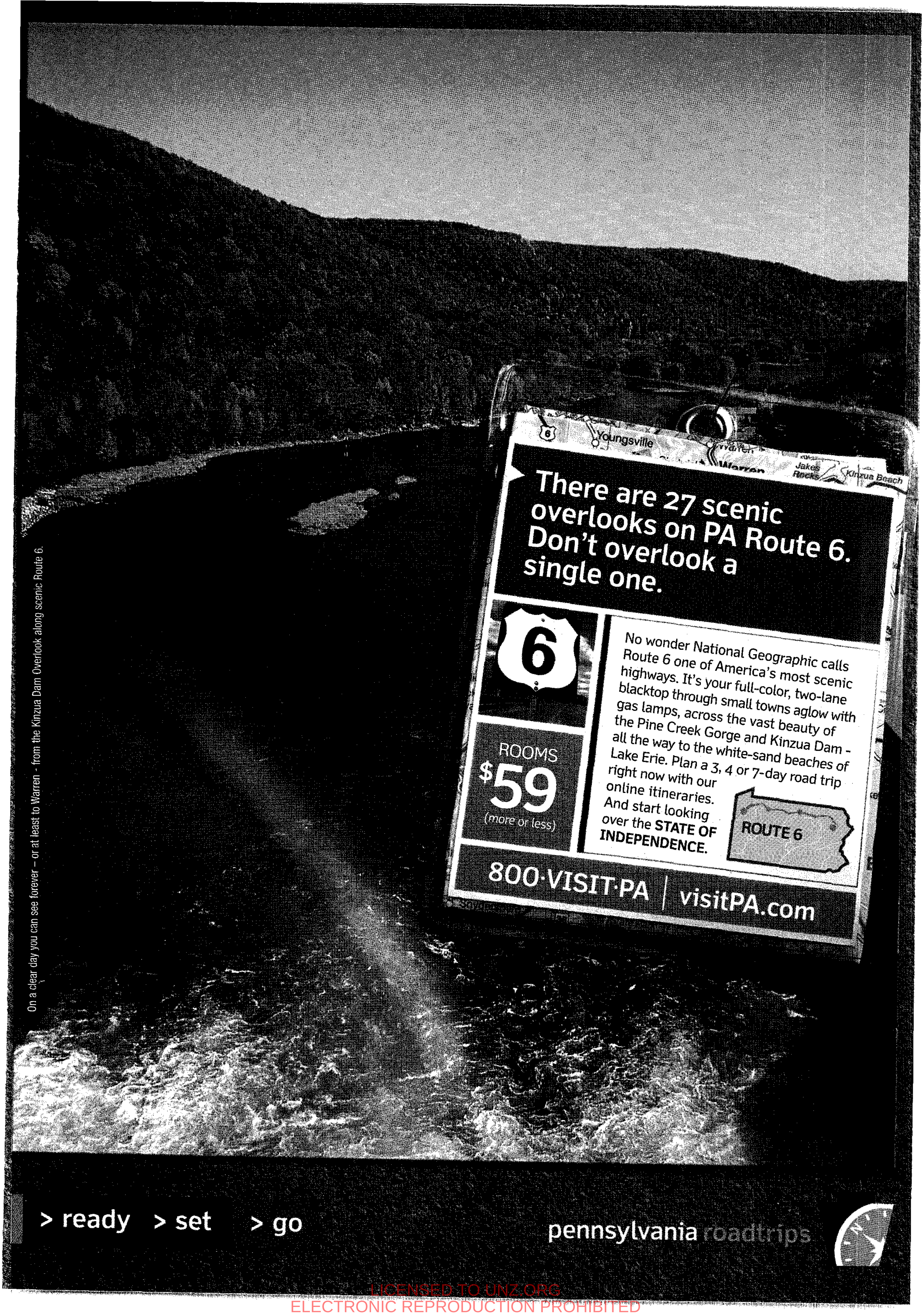

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CAMPAIGN JOURNAL

DAMAGE CONTROL

Voters need to believe that John Kerry can put the country back on track.

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH

During the loneliest days of his campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomination, last December, when he was trailing Al Sharpton in some polls and reporters covering the race were placing bets that he'd drop out before the first voters were heard from in the Iowa caucuses, Senator John Kerry came to New York to address the Council on Foreign Relations. It was hard, then, to find anyone outside his immediate family who would speak with unaverted eyes of the likelihood of a Kerry comeback. Even among the Democrats in his audience, which was packed with soberly tailored politicians, diplomats, military officers, and captains of finance, industry, philanthropy, and think tanks, there was a sense of near-certitude—for some delightful, for others grim—that Howard Dean was unstoppable. As a governor, Dean had been spared having to take sides when the resolution authorizing President George W. Bush to invade Iraq was passed in both houses of Congress, in October of 2002, and he'd made himself a scourge to his rivals in the primary race who voted for it. He called them "Bush Lite." Kerry's deeply recessed eyes, small as an elephant's, appeared more than usually narrowed in those days, and his smile, too, had tightened into the sort of skeptical wince that a cartoon dad displays to signal his endurance of adolescent noise. But he didn't waste a word on Dean when he addressed the council.

Kerry had stayed up late for several nights, crafting his speech, and it was as succinct and cogent a summation of his case against the President as he has offered to date. "Simply put," Kerry declared, "the Bush Administration has pursued the most arrogant, inept, reckless, and ideological foreign policy in modern history":

> In the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks, the world rallied to the common cause of fighting terrorism. But President Bush has squandered that historic moment. . . . He rushed into battle—and he went almost alone. . . . I believed a year ago and I believe now that we had to hold Saddam Hussein accountable and that we needed to lead in that effort. But this Administration did it in the worst possible way: without the United Nations, without our allies, without a plan to win the peace. So we are left asking: How is it possible to liberate a country, depose a ruthless dictator who at least in the past had weapons of mass destruction, and convert a preordained success into a diplomatic fiasco? How is it possible to do what the Bush Administration has done in Iraq: win a great military victory yet make America weaker?

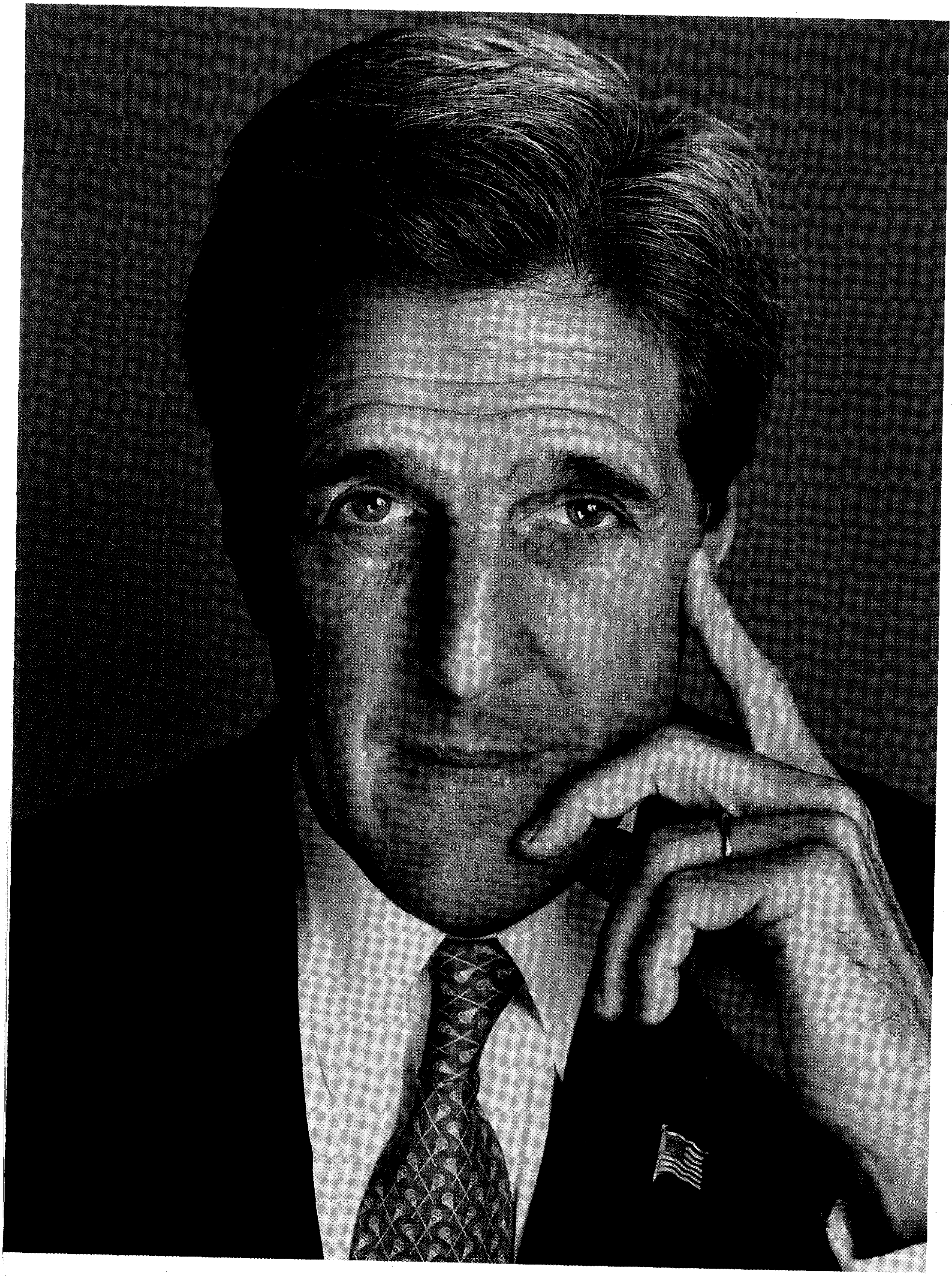
Kerry called on the Administration to "swallow its pride" and do what it should have done in the first place: bring in the U.N. and the "international community" to help America succeed instead of inviting failure alone.

Kerry's position has not changed, and, seven months later, his critique of Bush is shared by a growing majority of voters. But passionate antipathy to Bush has not translated into a corresponding enthusiasm for Kerry. Even after his astonishing sweep of the primaries, and the widely celebrated selection of John Edwards as his running mate, Kerry perplexes much of the electorate. Although he has led Bush in the polls during the runup to the Democratic Convention, many voters still complain that they do not know what he stands for. Kerry can be frustratingly vague and inarticulate, but then Presidential challengers—who have no power to take action—have always thought it wise not to box themselves into specific foreign-policy commitments. In a race that is sure to be uncommonly harsh and uncommonly dirty, Kerry has sought to limit his size as a target. His ever-sharpening attacks on an ever more vulnerable President aside, he avoids taking firm positions on the immediate tactical questions of Iraq policy (whether the U.S. should send more troops, how to deal with the insurgents, how much de-Baathification is too little or too much), preferring to talk about strategy in broad terms that create the maximum contrast between his position and that of the President. Indeed, when it comes to Iraq, Kerry has been largely content so far to allow the Presidential race to play out as a one-man scramble, Bush vs. Bush.

Throughout the spring and early summer—with exposés of Bush's rush to war stacking the best-seller lists, while the September 11th commission hearings filled television screens, alongside reports of rampant insurrection in Iraq and the irreparable disgrace of Americans torturing Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib prison—Kerry seemed to be measuring out his comments on the war with deliberate reserve. "A few months ago," Richard Holbrooke said to me, "I couldn't go down the street in New York or Washington without people stopping me and asking, 'Why isn't he speaking out more clearly on Iraq?' " But Holbrooke, who is considered a leading contender for the post of Secretary of State in a Kerry Administration, thought that Kerry had just the right strategy. "We are in the throes of the greatest crisis since Vietnam and maybe even worse. Kerry has to allow events to unfold. But he should not be expected to lay out a plan significantly more detailed than he has, because it's not necessary at this point. Everyone knows he would do it differently." Sandy Berger, who was Bill Clinton's national-security adviser and who is now advis-

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Senator John Kerry, at Kerry headquarters, Washington, D.C., June 11, 2004.



ing Kerry, agreed, and he went further. "There are no silver bullets on Iraq," he said. "So if people are waiting for John Kerry to say, 'The answer is Rosebud,' there is no Rosebud."

Americans are unaccustomed to questions of foreign policy, grand strategy, and war figuring decisively in a Presidential contest. In the nearly thirty years since our evacuation from Vietnam, such matters have been the province of specialists, addressed on the campaign trail with a minimum of partisan passion, either in broad abstractions (Reagan's "evil empire," Bush's "new world order," Clinton's "assertive multilateralism") or technocratically (arms control, U.N. resolutions, weapons systems, trade agreements). The shock of the September 11th attacks in 2001 forced these issues to the center of public consciousness and, simultaneously, muted political debate as the leaders of both parties allowed the President and his most favored ministers—Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, John Ashcroft—an extraordinarily free hand to promulgate and implement his war policy abroad and at home. It took Dean's brief and sensational antiwar candidacy to bring this go-along-and-get-along period to an end. Since then, the unravelling of Bush's case for attacking Saddam Hussein, and his retreat from his original ambitions for postwar Iraq, have left him increasingly on the defensive.

Subtract Iraq from the equation, and this would be a completely different election. Had Bush prosecuted the war differently—with the degree of international backing that Kerry advocated—or focussed his warrior energies after September 11th on making a success of rebuilding Afghanistan and pursuing Al Qaeda, who would now hold it against him? Ten years ago, Henry Kissinger identified "two contradictory attitudes toward foreign policy" in American history: "The first is that America serves its values best by perfecting democracy at home, thereby acting as a beacon for the rest of mankind; the second, that America's values impose on it an obligation to crusade for them around the world." Adherents of the America-as-beacon school were disposed toward isolationism, while those who subscribed to the notion of America as crusader were compelled to commit America abroad. When Bush ran for President, four years ago, he was an old-school beacon man, hostile to "nation building" and the overextension of American forces. After September 11th, he came out as a crusader, with an absolutist twist—a unilateralism so uncompromising that, as Kerry put it to me, "we're the ones isolated."

Despite the bloody and embittering disarray of Iraqi life after more than a year under the American dispensation, Bush describes the Iraq adventure as a great success for the cause of freedom—exactly as he said it would be before the war. The main change in attitude lies in the grammatical perspective, a shift in tense from future perfect to present continuous. If anything, Bush's insistence on the righteousness of his script has intensified. He jokes about never reading newspapers, lets it be known that he communicates with the Almighty, and dismisses his critics as pessimists. He told the nation that if he had made any mistakes he was unaware of them, and he said, "I fully understand the consequences of what we're doing. We're changing the world."

Last month on C-SPAN, Kerry responded, "If you haven't made mistakes, you're not a living human." By way of an example, he pointed to his own Senate vote, in October of 2002, for the Iraq war resolution. His mistake, he said, was "to trust what the President said" at the time. But Kerry didn't repudiate his vote; he never has, even when the temptation was enormous. On the day after his appearance at the Council on Foreign Relations, last December, he spent the better part of two hours at the Upper West Side apartment of the comedian and Democratic activist Al Franken, trying to justify the vote to a couple of dozen pundits and reporters. It was a parochial gathering, all male, overwhelmingly Jewish, and, with the exception of a few professional agnostics, openly identified as liberal or, at least, unhappy with Bush. A friendly crowd, you would think, but Kerry tied himself in knots, rehashing all the what-ifs that he'd struggled with following Bush's challenge to the U.N., a day after the first anniversary of the September 11th attacks: Join us in enforcing the many long-standing Security Council resolutions against Iraq, or we'll do it our way without you. No politician at the time doubted Saddam's mendacity, or questioned the existence of his arsenal of illegal weapons of mass destruction, and Bush promised that he would make war only as a last resort, and only with the fullest possible international support. It was obvious to Kerry that a President should have the authority to back up diplomacy with force, and he had announced before casting his vote that he was voting not for war but to prevent it. The attitude at Franken's place was: Yes, sure, but how could you? Kerry said again that he'd been misled, and, when that still wasn't good enough for some, he shouldered a measure of blame. "I believed," he said, and he repeated the phrase several times: "I believed."

On the campaign trail, Kerry's oratorical style often brings to mind a man hailing a ship—one hand clutching a mike in front of his Adam's apple, the other hand pistoning from shoulder to waist like an oil-field pump jack, his voice hammering along to the same relentless rhythm, a seesaw booming. At his declamatory worst, Kerry can turn good, sound thought and cogent argument into a swamp of sound that inclines the listener to tune out, much like the *mwah-mwah-mwah* of adults in "Peanuts" cartoons. But at the end of April, in Fulton, Missouri, he spoke about Iraq in the gym of Westminster College—a forum made famous by Winston Churchill, who first used the term "iron curtain" there, in a speech that is remembered as an opening salvo of the Cold War—and, reading from a teleprompter with both hands clutching the lectern, Kerry shed the grandiosity and sounded more the way he does in serious one-on-one conversation, firm and direct, comfortably in command. The shift in Kerry's tone reflected his purpose, which was to speak, for once, not as a candidate must to score points and win votes but as a President should, and he spelled out the obligations of that purpose step by step as he went along: to name the "hard truths," then to describe "what is possible," and, finally, to explain, "Here is how we must proceed."

Kerry owed his presence in Fulton to Dick Cheney, who had spoken at the hallowed gym a few days earlier and had spent so much of his time there Kerry-bashing that the school president—a retired brigadier general—had invited the Democrat to speak for himself. Cheney's negative example required Kerry to demonstrate statesmanship by offering an alternative, corrective agenda. "This may be our last chance to get this right," Kerry said, and, as always, that meant "We have to truly internationalize both politically and militarily: we cannot depend on a U.S.-only presence."

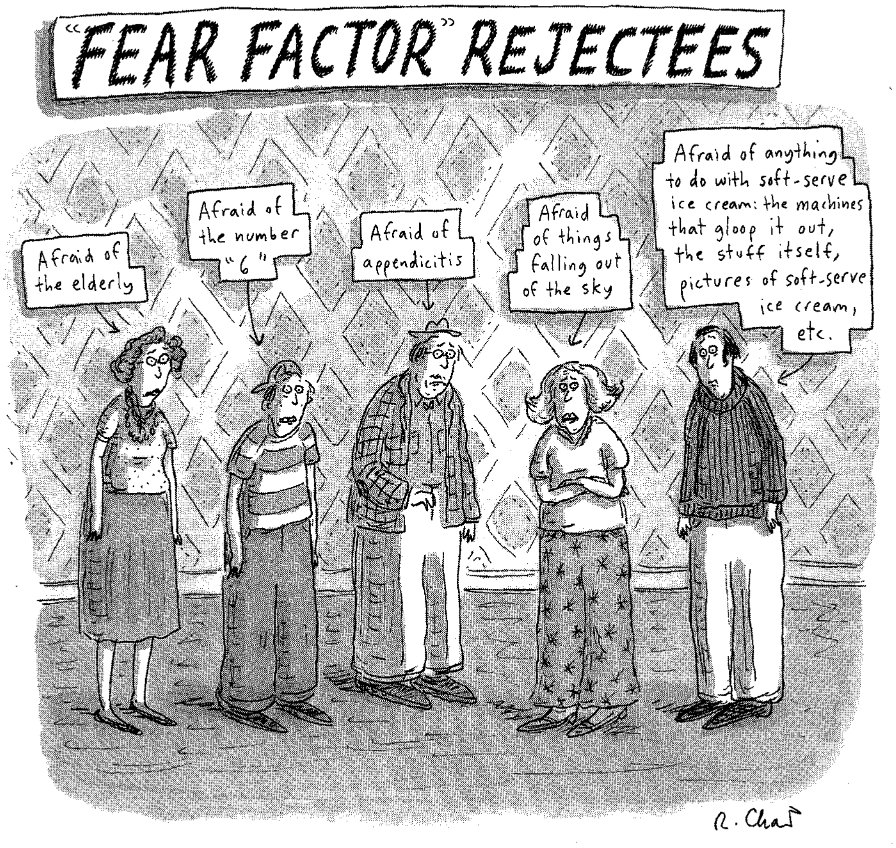
The mission he had in mind was elaborate: involving the U.N. and NATO and an international high commissioner in a dizzying hatchwork of overlapping and shared authority. It was as lavish an expression of multilateralism as the Bush mission is stark in its unilateralism. But, while there were too many notes in the composition of Kerry's dream coalition, it struck the signature chord of his campaign's foreign policy unmistakably: that "America is safer and stronger when it is respected around the world, not feared," and that such respect must come from strong alliances, forged by the hard work of diplomatic persuasion under committed Presidential leadership. "Now the question," Kerry announced. "Why would others join a cause that they did not support in the first place? For one simple reason: it's in their profound self-interest. And the President needs to put that self-interest on the table and before the world."

Kerry can't be specific about what he would do in Iraq if he is sworn in next January 20th, because nobody knows what will be happening there then. He said that "America must lead in new ways" to meet "new threats," "new enemies," and "new opportunities" with "new approaches" and "new strategies," to forge "a new era of alliances" and "a new direction in Iraq," but there was nothing novel in the foreign policy he described. What he was calling for was a renewal of the approach to world order that Churchill envisioned in 1946—the preservation of international security through the web of alliances of the newly established United Nations. For all its inadequacies and failings, the Churchillian ideal of international coöperation had been upheld as the best way to safeguard America's security and interests by every President until the Bush Administration kicked it over. This is the nut of Kerry's argument on foreign relations—that Bush, despite his campaign slogan of "Steady leadership in times of change," is a radical, whose "with us or against us" doctrine of preëmptive unilateralism amounts to a Texas-twanged cry of *Aux barricades!* By contrast, the Senator from Massachusetts came across at Westminster as the conservative in the race.

But did this "plan" for multilateralism as an expression of naked self-interest amount to a countervailing Kerry doctrine? "I think it's such a mistake to try to find one or two words, fancy slogans, to reduce a complicated process," Kerry said to me, during a lengthy conversation in a muggy old athletes' training room at Westminster, where he draped his elongated limbs over a too small chair. The notion of a Kerry doctrine seemed to take him by surprise, and not pleasantly. "You have to be careful of ideology clouding your decision-making process, which I think this Administration has been exceedingly guilty of," he said, and added, "I don't want to use the word 'doctrine,' but I do think it is time for a new—I said it today—a very new calculation of how we protect our interests and balance them in the world." At the same time, he allowed, "There are times and places where you may lay down a law of behavior that amounts to a doctrine—you know, how you take a nation to war. Pretty firm in my belief system is the notion that, with the exception of an immediate emergency you have to respond to, it's a last resort." As a naval officer in Vietnam, Kerry had learned that he could kill when it came to that, and he told me, "I would never hesitate to use force to protect our country in any moment in time if I thought it was critical." But he didn't say how he might make that judgment.

Kerry has a habit of phoning around among a far-flung network of counsellors to gather conflicting opinions before reaching a decision. One result of this spongelike method is that it can be very hard for the person on the other end of a conversation with him to know just where he is heading as he circumnavigates an issue. It is not always obvious that Kerry knows, either, and his disinclination to codify his thinking on international relations, beyond a broad internationalist critique of the Bush doctrine, is generally seen as a political handicap.

"If you're an extremist, everything's clear," Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was Jimmy Carter's national-security adviser, said to me. "You're fighting terror, period, wherever it is—it's evil. Or you love everybody and foreign policy consists of being sweet to others, period. Whereas if you're in the middle you have to sort of


"FEAR FACTOR" REJECTEES
Afraid of the elderly
Afraid of the number "6"
Afraid of appendicitis
Afraid of things falling out of the sky
Afraid of anything to do with soft-serve ice cream: the machines that gloop it out, the stuff itself, pictures of soft-serve ice cream, etc.
R. Chast

"Live with it, buster! You're not the child she never had—I'm the child she never had."

• •

say, Well, we have to use power, but we have to be sensitive to principle, and you have to sometimes deal with dictators, yet promote democracy, and sometimes you have to use force, but generally speaking you have to be careful not to be excessive. You know, that kind of stuff. And that's always much more difficult to explain."

Kerry, however, makes no apologies for viewing foreign policy as a balancing act. After all, our chief enemies abroad, whether they be jihadi terrorists or North Korean Communists, are radical fundamentalists for whom dogma is impervious to reality. "Steady leadership in times of change" is a slogan that could apply equally to Kim Jong Il and Osama bin Laden. But Kerry contends that the slogan does not properly describe George Bush, and his objection is as much to the word "steady" as it is to the claim of "leadership." Throughout the Democratic primary race, Kerry assailed Bush as "the biggest say-one-thing, do-another" President he'd ever seen, a charge the Bush campaign simplified to "flip-flopper" and hurled back at him in a seventy-million-dollar advertising campaign attacking him as if he were the incumbent. The accusations sound the same—each man is calling the other a liar—but there is a sharp difference between Bush's complaint that Kerry is confusing and his positions elastic, and Kerry's argument that Bush sows confusion with words and deeds that are deviously at odds. In Kerry's view, Bush may come on as an ideologue, but his actions, whether in Afghanistan or Iraq, or in regard to homeland security, are invariably opportunistic, insufficient, and lacking the commitment that true conviction requires—in a word, cynical. In contrast to Bush's dogmatic rigidity, Kerry's flexibility—a difficult selling point for a candidate in any other context—can seem reassuring. His objection to ideology appears to be both visceral and intellectual, and in advocating what might be called a return from a faith-based foreign policy to a reality-based approach, his greatest challenge in running against Bush without an opposing doctrine is to make the case for being nonideological without seeming unprincipled.

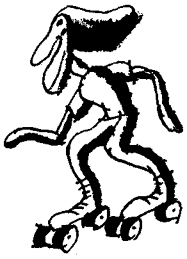
"I have a thirty-five-year record of making it clear what my foreign policy is," Kerry told me a few weeks ago in Washington. "I supported Bosnia. I supported Kosovo. I supported Haiti. I supported Panama. I support military action when I think it is appropriate. I supported deploying troops in the Western Pacific when we needed to stand up to the testing that the Chinese were doing with respect to Taiwan. I'm clear about my willingness to use force if necessary to protect our interests in the world and obviously to protect the security of our country." At the same time, he said, "There are some clear routes by which you build alliances and make yourself stronger . . . build legitimacy for what you might have to do on your own otherwise." After all, he said, "nineteenth-century and twentieth-century leaders didn't have it all wrong as they understood the machinations of alliance politics and the need to negotiate your interest to the degree that you can until you've exhausted every possibility of doing so. You go backward to Disraeli and Metternich and forward to Henry Kissinger, in more recent times, and see how effectively we've moved on that stage. I don't think this crowd has moved with great effect at all. I think they've been strangely and uniquely ideologically obsessed, Iraq-centric, to the exclusion of other critical priorities on the face of this planet and our security needs as a nation."

In 1971, as a leader of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Kerry was called to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where he argued that it was not too late for America to reverse its course in Vietnam, so that "thirty years from now, when a man is walking down the street without an arm, or a face, or a leg, and a little boy asks him why, he will have to say 'Vietnam'—and mean not a desert, not an obscene memory, but mean instead a place where America finally turned and soldiers like us helped in the turning." President Nixon was rattled. A White House tape made the next day, and quoted by the historian Douglas Brinkley in his book "Tour of Duty," recorded Nixon telling his national-security adviser, Henry Kissinger, and his chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, that Kerry was a "real star," and that, unlike the usual run of "bearded weirdos" protesting the war, "he was extremely effective." (Within a week, Nixon's counsel, Charles Colson, was looking for dirt on Kerry. "He is sort of a phony, isn't he?" Nixon asked hopefully.)

Kerry believed that the American mission in Vietnam could not be saved, but he has opposed calls for a withdrawal from Iraq. At a campaign stop at City College, in Manhattan, in mid-April, when the Marines' fierce, and ultimately failed, campaign to pacify the Iraqi insurgent capital of Falluja was at its deadliest, Kerry was harangued by another former Vietnam War protester, a retired math professor named Walter Daum. "What the United States is doing is bombing hospitals, bombing mosques, sniping at civilians, killing hundreds of civilians, wounding thousands of civilians. And you say, 'Stay the course?' " Daum shouted. Kerry waded toward him through the audience. "This is an imperialist country that's fighting an imperialist war," Daum said. "People hate George Bush. By the end of your Presidency, people will hate you for the same thing." Kerry had drawn to just beyond arm's reach of Daum. "We are where we are, sir," he said firmly. "And it would be unwise beyond belief for the United States of America to leave a failed Iraq in its wake."

Being attacked as a hawk from the left while being dismissed as a dove from the right has helped Kerry to position himself as a centrist on both domestic and foreign policy. But questions about how and when he would use force abroad have vexed him throughout his Presidential bid, not least because he voted against the original Gulf War. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was an act of naked aggression, Kuwait was an ally, and vigorous American diplomacy had mustered a broad-based international coalition, including troops from five Arab nations, to join in the fighting under a U.N. mandate. During the early primaries, Howard Dean upheld the first Gulf War as being every bit as legitimate as the current one was unjustified, and he questioned Kerry's judgment as a potential Commander-in-Chief.

Kerry defends his stand on both wars on the same ground: that the action was needlessly rushed, when a little bit more time could have been used to build a lot more support—in 1990 among an almost evenly divided American public, and last year among potential allies. In fact, in his Senate speech against the Gulf War resolution in 1991, Kerry repeatedly invoked the failures and agonies of Vietnam, arguing that the country was not ready to sacrifice another generation to the horrors of combat. He maintained that diplomacy could get Saddam out of Kuwait, and although he insisted that he was not a pacifist, he sure sounded like one when he read to his colleagues from the classic antiwar novel "Johnny Got His Gun."



After Saddam's surrender, in 1991, the first President Bush declared that America had been cured of its isolationist Vietnam syndrome, and, by all indications, Kerry was proof of that. In the subsequent decade, his willingness to approve force evolved, crisis by crisis, from a stated principle into a practice. A member of his Senate staff told me that, like everyone in Washington, he had agreed with the Clinton Administration's refusal in 1994 to acknowledge the genocide in Rwanda, much less approve an international intervention there, even without American troops. "We learned a lesson: what happens if you don't act to stop these kinds of crimes, and that we had to do it, that that was our responsibility," the staffer said, and Kerry later supported American interventions in the Balkans. "Republicans hated—hated!—Clinton for going into Kosovo and Bosnia," the staffer said. "And now they're all gung ho." Bush has lately claimed the Iraq war to be a Kosovo-like "humanitarian intervention," but that notion has never had more than a minuscule following among Democrats; and although Dean's candidacy imploded in Iowa, and voters united around Kerry as the best bet to beat Bush, a deep vein of disapproval for his Iraq votes still runs through the Democratic base.

That unease is compounded by the obvious political calculation of Kerry's vote last fall to withhold eighty-seven billion dollars of auxiliary support for the military in Afghanistan and Iraq. As one of his advisers put it to me, "Off the record, he did it because of Howard Dean. On the record, he has an elaborate explanation." Kerry originally supported an amendment sponsored by Senator Joseph Biden that would have funded the war by temporarily reducing Bush's tax cuts to the wealthiest one per cent of Americans. But Biden's bill had no chance of passing in a Republican-dominated Senate, and Kerry's absurdly abbreviated account of the matter—"I did vote for the eighty-seven billion before I voted against it"—has left him open to relentless Republican ridicule. Biden himself ultimately voted for the money, and he confirmed that Kerry's decision not to was "tactical," an attempt "to prove to Dean's guys I'm not a warmonger."

Kerry prefers to describe his opposition as a protest vote, since he cast it knowing that the measure would pass, and he considers it a minor matter compared with the Bush Administration's own inconsistencies about Iraq. "They have flip-flopped every step of the way in this thing," he told me. "They flip-flopped on their rationale, they flip-flopped on what they said they'd do, they flip-flopped on each of the promises the President made about how he'd conduct it. They flip-flopped on when they would transfer authority. They flip-flopped on to whom. They flip-flopped on the U.N. They have flip-flopped on the intel, and they have obviously flip-flopped on the numbers of troops needed and how they would manage those troops, what the deployment times would be. I mean, this is an unbelievable series of flip-flops, with grave consequences."

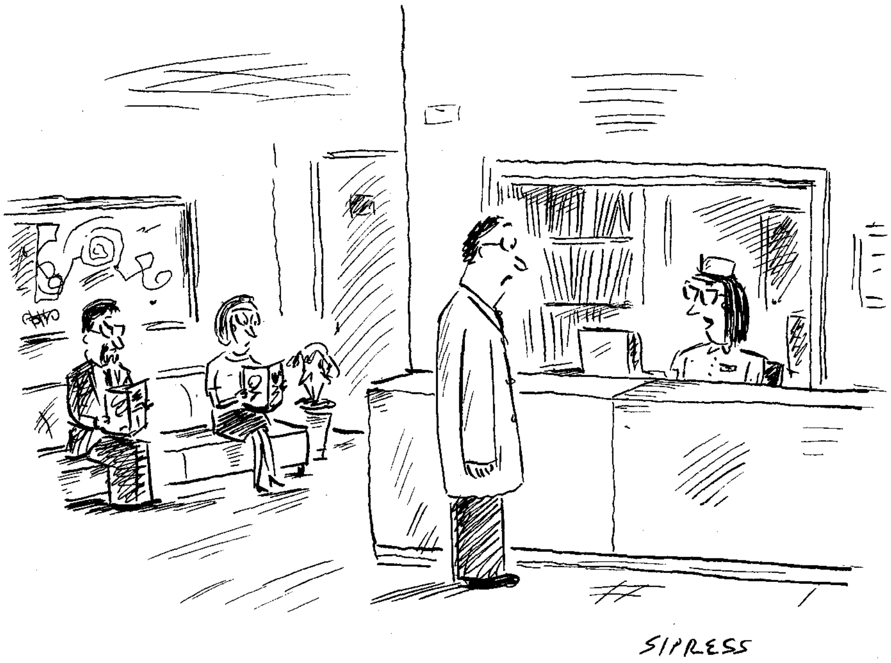
At campaign rallies, Kerry often says of Bush, "If you think I would have taken us to war the way he did, you shouldn't vote for me." This line is carefully formulated, he told me, "Because I might well have been in Iraq if Saddam had stiffed the U.N., continued to not allow inspections, hidden things. But I would have brought other countries to the point of impatience with him. Then they would have been there with us. And the President could have done that. I know it because I spent the time to go up and meet with Security Council representatives. I talked to them at great length prior to the vote."

Kerry was the only senator to go to New York for such a meeting. "I came away convinced that they were serious, that the resolutions did mean something, that they saw it as a moment for the U.N. to stand up for itself," he said. "But they had political issues in their own countries, their own populations weren't ready, they needed to go through a certain walk up to it. That was legitimate, and the President never gave them a chance to do that—forced it down their throats, built up so fast—and they became aware that he just intended to go do this. He sent them a message of disrespect without the process. Then they got their backs up, and that led to a series of stubborn encounters that resulted in a failed foreign policy."

Last month, when the Bush Administration secured a resolution from the Security Council lending a stamp of international legitimacy to the new Iraqi interim government, Kerry told me, "They're moving in my direction. What they're doing is what they've been advised to do from Day One, and stubbornly refused to do." But he pointed out that immediately after the U.N. vote Bush hosted the heads of state of the G8 at Sea Island, Georgia, and they rebuffed his request for more substantial assistance. "No debt relief, no troops, no money," Kerry said. "Finally, the Administration is begrudgingly trying to take some international steps, and it's probably too little too late." At NATO meetings in late June, Bush was again denied any help on the ground in Iraq by our allies.

Kerry remains confident that if he were President he could succeed where Bush has failed. Indeed, he seems to attribute all that is strained in the transatlantic alliance to the Administration's hubris and its diplomatic incompetence. "It will be easier for a Kerry Administration to call on our allies to fulfill their responsibilities," James P. Rubin, one of Kerry's senior foreign-policy advisers, said to me. "When a President can go to countries and say 'I'm going to take steps that you've been calling for,' he can also say, 'Now take steps to do what we need.' It won't be easy, but at this point there's a political cost for countries to coöperate with the U.S. With a Kerry Administration, that cost will change." But European resistance to the Iraq mission was stubborn from the outset, and an influential European diplomat in Washington told me, "If what John Kerry says today is that he thinks that Europeans could drag that car out of the mud now, I believe this is not a realistic expectation." European leaders would certainly welcome a change of American Presidents, but they have their own elections to think about, and it is not clear that they would make much of a sacrifice for the new man. "Because of how it's been handled so far, Iraq is really not a good case to demonstrate the great advantages of transatlantic coöperation," another diplomat said to me. "It is actually the worst possible case. Iraq is simply too much of a mess."

Kerry rejects the notion that Iraq is a quagmire. Watching the ferocity and the futility of the siege of Falluja, he said, reminded him of "a Hamburger Hill kind of mentality." But he does not agree with other leading Democrats, like his friend Edward Kennedy, that Bush has created a new Vietnam in the sands of Arabia. "It could become one," Kerry said. "Is it yet? No, it is not, and it doesn't have to be." Indeed, the possibility horrifies him. One of his proudest achievements in the Senate was his work, in collaboration with his colleague and fellow-veteran John McCain, to establish the normalization of relations between Washington and Hanoi—an effort that required intense diplomacy not only with the Vietnamese but also, more painstakingly, at home, where persistent claims that Vietnam was still holding American prisoners of war, and withholding the remains of Americans listed as missing in action, had first to be laid to rest. Nevertheless, he said, "the lessons of the war I fought in are



"Your appointment with the doctor is at eleven-fifteen, but his appointment with you is at twelve-fifteen."

clear and strong and powerful, but they're not the whole definition of my foreign policy by any stretch of the imagination."

Kerry allowed that, for a young man at war, "seeing people killed and being asked to use guns against other human beings has an impact." But he said, "The real impact is in what it taught me about setting mission goals; what it taught me about the promises you make to Americans; what it taught me about telling the truth about what you're into and not lying to the American people about what you're trying to accomplish or how; what it taught me about obligations to those who serve; what it taught me about feeling left alone by your own government and not having the support of the nation." Kerry didn't think George W. Bush had learned those lessons about war. "He saw it in a big sort of distant way," Kerry said. "He didn't even read his father's book, the critical page—or, if he did, he ignored it."

The book, "A World Transformed," was written by the first President Bush and his national-security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, and the page in question describes why Bush the father left Saddam Hussein in power at the end of the Gulf War. To eliminate him would have incurred "incalculable human and political costs," they claimed. "We would have been forced to occupy Baghdad and, in effect, rule Iraq. The coalition would instantly have collapsed, the Arabs deserting it in anger and other allies pulling out as well. . . . Furthermore, we had been self-consciously trying to set a pattern for handling aggression in the post-Cold War world. Going in and occupying Iraq, thus unilaterally exceeding the United Nations' mandate, would have destroyed the precedent of international response to aggression we hoped to establish. Had we gone the invasion route, the United States could conceivably still be an occupying power in a bitterly hostile land. It would have been a dramatically different—and perhaps barren—outcome."

At the time, Kerry was one of many critics of the first President Bush's abandonment of the oppressed Iraqis. But, in criticizing the second President Bush's failure to plan for a post-Saddam Iraq, he told me, "Everything you're seeing today was laid out in his father's book." As it happens, a number of things we're seeing today were also laid out in a book by Kerry's father, Richard Kerry, who was a mid-level diplomat in the Foreign Service in Europe in the fifties and sixties, where many of his assignments involved American relations with NATO. In 1990—twenty-eight years after his retirement, and ten years before his death—he published a short book called "The Star-Spangled Mirror: America's Image of Itself and the World," a critical analysis of American attitudes toward other countries, political systems, and cultures, and particularly toward our NATO allies. "On occasion we seemed to be telling them that we understood their vital interests better than they did," Richard Kerry wrote, adding, "On many occasions the need to consult them in advance before taking unilateral action was simply ignored, and we often showed visible impatience with consultation." What troubled him was what he perceived as an "ethnocentric" strain in the spirit of American exceptionalism, an approach to the world based on a stubborn conviction that "everyone *ought* to be like us." Although the book was published after the Berlin Wall was breached, it was obviously completed while the wall still stood, and at its core it is an argument for what is known as a "realist" foreign policy—driven by a strict sense of national interests, with respect for other sovereignties, however alien or unsavory their values may be.

BOBBY'S LIBRARY OF JEANS

Richard Kerry took an equally dim view of Reagan's "fatal error of seeing U.S. security as dependent on illusions of propagating democracy," and of Carter's "practice of asserting a 'linkage' that injected human rights into strategic issues." The elder Kerry was an anti-crusader, without quite being comfortable with the idea of America as beacon, either. "The struggle to put policy in touch with reality was difficult enough before the siren song of promoting human rights," he wrote. There wasn't a President in the last half century whom he didn't find to be infected by the zeal to divide the world into us and them. He was vexed by "those characteristics of the American mind which appear unalterably set against any contradiction by reality." As for America's involvement in Cold War proxy wars in the Third World, he wrote, "it requires a measure of self-righteousness to see unilateral measures as an act of collective security."

Richard Kerry was a first-generation American, born in Boston in 1915. His parents, Fritz Kohn and Ida Lowe, were born Jewish—his father in what is now the Czech Republic, his mother in Hungary—and when they married they changed their name to Kerry (taking the name from a map of Ireland, the story goes) and converted to Catholicism before emigrating to America, in 1905. Fritz had become Frederick, also known as Fred, a businessman, who made and lost several fortunes in the shoe trade and as a sort of management consultant who reorganized department stores. One day, when Richard Kerry was six, Fred Kerry went to the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston and shot himself in the head with a handgun. His widow took their three children back to Europe, rearing them in France and Germany. Richard Kerry returned to America to attend Yale as an undergraduate, and law school at Harvard, after which he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He met his wife, Rosemary Forbes, in Brittany, where her family had a summer house. She was as pure an American aristocrat as they come, a descendant of John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts, and of the Reverend John Forbes, who was posted to Florida in the service of the British Empire in 1763, only to side with the Crown during the American Revolution and return to England, leaving behind two sons, who grew wealthy in the China trade. During the Second World War, Richard Kerry tested planes for the Army, until he contracted tuberculosis, and he was in a military hospital in Denver when his first son, John Forbes Kerry, was born, sixty-one years ago this December.

So Richard Kerry was a man of many worlds and many perspectives. He served America, and found America strange—"virtually the only nation that defines itself by dedication to a value system." Others were defined by blood and soil or by raw power, and that made sense to him, too: if they didn't want to change us, why should we seek to change them? Richard Kerry left the diplomatic service a disappointed, perhaps even disillusioned man, according to those who knew him. He had wanted to be an ambassador. The passion of his later years was sailing. He taught John Kerry to fly, but he never told him of his own father's Jewish birth or the details of his suicide; a Boston *Globe* reporter broke that news, just two years ago. John Kerry's younger brother, Cameron Kerry, a Boston lawyer, describes the relationship between the father and his eldest son as close and "sometimes contentious," with "competitiveness from both sides" and "arguing about politics, adolescent kinds of battles." Cameron Kerry, who is one of his brother's closest advisers, told me that his father bombarded the Senator with faxes, telling him what to do on political issues—and "if he really meant it" every word was in capital letters. It was "his way of asserting himself, and taking, I think, great vicarious pleasure in John's achievements and position," Cameron Kerry said.

The example of the two Presidents Bush stands as a strong caution against ascribing to a son the politics of his father, but it is impossible to read the subheadings of Richard Kerry's chapter on the Vietnam War without hearing an echo in John Kerry's view of Iraq: "The Course of Escalation," "The Inability to Come to Grips with Reality," "The Inability to Admit a Mistake," "The Inability to Remain in the Context of Limited War" (i.e., Al Qaeda, not Saddam), "The Inability to Do Without Absolutes." Like his father, John Kerry is often described as a foreign-policy "realist." He recently told the Washington *Post* that he did not think human rights should be the defining issue in international relations, and he also shares his father's aversion to grandiose expressions of American exceptionalism. He came of age believing that a misguided foreign policy is one of the greatest threats to America's well-being. One of his Senate aides told me that he recoiled in dismay when Madeleine Albright, speaking about Iraq as Clinton's Secretary of State, declared, "If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future." Of course, the aide said, "it is true that we are the biggest guy on the block. But I think in John Kerry's mind that phrase, in the ears of others, rang very poorly." Kerry did not dispute Albright's contention, but he expressed the sentiment differently. "It has fallen to us to be that country," he told me. "It's not romantic, it's not arrogant, it's just a reality, that we've been needed to lead in so many situations to make something happen."

Kerry acknowledges his father's influence "as a sort of thoughtfulness about listening and about culture and history, aspirations of other countries, and trying to see them through their perspective, not just your own, because you'll understand better how to get from here to there if you do that." But, even as Kerry expressed filial gratitude and respect, he stressed that he'd also disagreed with his father on many issues. "He could sometimes come to an outcome that was less ready to use force than I might have been," Kerry told me. "He was not thrilled with Kosovo or Bosnia, and I felt it was critical."

For all his caution about gunboat diplomacy, and his qualified view of the value of human-rights-driven foreign policy, in the past year Kerry has criticized the Bush Administration for refusing to send marines into Liberia, when both sides in that country's devastating civil war pleaded for an American intervention, and for failing to intervene more swiftly during political turmoil in Haiti. He has also called for urgent American involvement to stop the genocidal campaign against the people of Darfur, in Sudan, where the head of the U.S. Agency for International Development recently warned, "If nothing changes, we will have a million casualties. If things improve, we can get it down to about three hundred thousand deaths."

There is no guessing what Kerry would do about Liberia, Haiti, or Darfur if he sat in the White House, but he says that the Iraq war needn't drive America back into the isolationist attitudes of the Vietnam syndrome. He insists that Iraq be seen as the Bush Administration's mistake, not America's, and that in the future, when there is a legitimate rationale to act in America's interest "with respect for the American people, with an openness, with truth, with legitimate cause and intelligence," then "Americans will follow the truth and respond to the real needs of our country."

No other Vietnam War hero has ever been nominated for President, nor has any other former antiwar leader, and, while Kerry presents himself as a unifying figure, he embodies a conflict that is still surprisingly raw. "He'll often thrash around in the night," the filmmaker George Butler, who is one of Kerry's oldest friends, told me. "He smashed up a lamp in my house in New Hampshire, in the bedroom where he was staying. Most Vietnam veterans go through this." Butler, who made Arnold Schwarznegger famous outside the weight-lifting community with the documentary "Pumping Iron," is now making a film about Kerry, based loosely on Douglas Brinkley's book, which tells the story of Kerry's service as a naval officer in command of Swift boats in 1968 and 1969. Kerry was in combat in Vietnam for four months, and he came home with three Purple Hearts for relatively minor wounds, a

Bronze Star "for heroic achievement," a Silver Star "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action," and with what he called his "war notes," hundreds of handwritten pages of journals and impressions. Excerpts from these writings form the best part of Brinkley's book. There is no more intimate glimpse into Kerry's inner reaches available, and what comes across, even when he is surrounded by the absurdity and waste of war, is the sense of a young man keenly alive to the world around him and to the strength of his own voice.

After a ferocious firefight, during which the corpse of a Vietnamese fighter he had known lay at his feet—"the alive shooting over the dead to remain alive"—Kerry wrote:

> I was amazed at how detached I was from the whole scene. I just lay in the ditch, not firing because I wanted to save ammo and because I couldn't see what I was firing at and I thought about what was happening in New York at that very moment and if people really felt that I was doing something worthwhile, while they went down to Schrafft's and had another ice cream sundae or while some fat little old man who made another million in the past months off defense contracts was charging another $100 call girl to his expense account. And then, when the shooting stopped, I came back to where I was.

On another occasion, he wrote several pages about a mission to drop off Navy SEAL commandos close to the Cambodian border:

> Running the rivers at night was something like flying a plane on instruments. The only difference was that we didn't have any instruments. When it was pitch-black and there was no moon, the banks would blend in with the water and looking through the glass windows in the pilothouse, it was exceedingly difficult to find a horizon and tell where one was in the river. One could feel a graceful motion from the calm cut of the boat through the water, and this only lent further to the feeling of vertigo that sometimes caught the drivers. . . .
>
> A group of the Vietnamese junks pulled in alongside us and we sat there listening to their small engines burp into the quiet of the night. Across the river, perhaps fifty yards away, we could see the villagers moving around in their huts, silhouetted by the fires that burned throughout the small town. The peculiar smell of their wood burning blew across us in wisps. All over Vietnam this smell had been the same. It was a smell that brought to mind poverty and dirty food and the ground to sleep on at night and it made me feel very clean and out of place.

Beyond the physical sensitivity of Kerry's fine-tuned prose—his acute alertness to the shifting elements of sight, sound, smell, and movement that compose his narrow riverine universe in the jungle—what is most striking about this passage is that so little of it is about him. Only at the end, as if in afterthought, does he step back from his immersion in the Vietnamese night to register his awareness of himself as an alien intruder. Even when he tells of dissociating himself from battle by shutting his mind's eye and thinking of Schrafft's the focus is on all that lies outside him.

This quality of apartness—some call it aloofness; some call it shyness—remains one of Kerry's most striking characteristics. In his boyhood, the Kerry family had no fixed address: they lived for a while on a farm outside Boston and for a time in Washington, then hopscotched around Europe on diplomatic postings of a few years each. When he was eleven, John Kerry was sent to boarding school in Switzerland for two years. Loneliness may be something one is born to—no formula can precisely correlate such inner states to external context—but Kerry's boyhood required him to fend for himself emotionally at an early age. His bloodlines carried a sense of privilege and noblesse oblige, but his parents' means were limited, and he could not take his position for granted. "We're not the Forbes fortune, unfortunately—not in the direct line," Cameron Kerry told me. "We were often exposed to it, around it, but not of it." When John Kerry was sent to prep school at St. Paul's, a great-aunt paid his tuition. In that bastion of sniffy Wasp insularity, Kerry stood out as a Catholic and as an unabashedly ambitious and serious kid. To boys with less, he might appear effete, but to those in his milieu who came from money and power sufficient not to question their entitlement he was often seen to be trying too hard.

"That irony is there," Cam Kerry, who eventually went to St. Paul's, too, said. He called the school "a very narrow place," and acknowledged that his brother had not always known how to connect. "When you're moving so fast, you don't get a chance to see the things around you, and John's always moving at a frenetic pace. Sometimes if you're going eighty-five miles an hour in a car, you don't see the things at the side of the road. If you're going slower, you have more time to do that." Cam Kerry explained his brother's hurtling momentum as "metabolic"—"I mean he just has extraordinary energy and drive." And John Kerry told me, "Lis-

"Any Impressionists in this crowd?"

"And don't forget to say hello to the kids."

• •

ten, I can veg out on a beach like everybody else and be very happy. But I am a person who likes to get things done."

Kerry's earnest intensity was better suited to Yale, where he forged passionate and enduring friendships. As a champion debater, the head of the Yale Political Union, a member of Skull and Bones, and, ultimately, class orator, he was already understood to have an eye on the White House. He claims that his great love in those years was aviation, and jokes that he "majored in flying" during his senior year, spending a lot of time in the air with his fellow-Bonesman Frederick Smith, who later founded FedEx. Kerry has attributed his decision to enlist in the Navy rather than the Air Force to his father's warning that the strain of serving as a pilot in wartime can dim the pure joy of flying for its own sake. Having volunteered for service, Kerry volunteered again for combat, although when he asked to be assigned to the Swift boats he thought they would be patrolling the South China Sea. "I didn't really want to get involved in the war," Kerry wrote later, and, he explained, "when I signed up for the Swift boats they had very little to do with the war." By the time he got his first boat, however, the Swift fleet was reassigned to the Mekong Delta, which was then one of the nastiest and deadliest arenas in Vietnam. Kerry's death-haunted journals are filled with fantasies of escape—to be a little boy again playing in the attic, to be like a toy bird, free "to hop on a breeze and be blown restlessly to some new horizon with new hope and strength."

These days, Kerry surrounds himself on the campaign with fellow-veterans, and he features his naval career heavily in campaign ads, but he prefers not to speak in any detail about what he went through in Vietnam. Few voters knew the story of how he won his Bronze Star for saving a man's life until that man, a lifelong Republican named Jim Rassmann, showed up in Des Moines during the last days of the Iowa primary race and returned the favor, helping to save Kerry's political life by describing how Kerry, wounded and under fire, pulled him, hand over hand, from the water after he was blown off another American boat. Even then, Kerry said almost nothing about the incident, leaving the talking to Rassmann, with whom he'd had no contact in the intervening thirty-five years. He also resists speaking publicly about the incident that won him the Silver Star, but his surviving crewmates have told how, when they were ambushed by a Vietcong guerrilla firing rockets from the riverbank, Kerry made an instantaneous decision that evasive action was impossible, turned his boat directly into the fire, beached it, and leaped ashore, to the astonishment of the man with the rocket launcher, who popped up from his spider hole and fled. Kerry chased him and killed him. Navy men were not supposed to leave their ships during combat, and before recommending Kerry for the medal his commanding officer quipped that he wasn't sure whether he shouldn't court-martial him instead.

Reading Brinkley's book, one wonders why Kerry's campaign does not make more of another occasion when Kerry was sharply reprimanded for having stepped ashore. On a narrow tributary of the Duong Keo River, he and his crew came upon what looked like a deserted village. Then someone thought he saw a man running away. There was no response to a call for surrender, and Kerry took his gun and went to have a look. As he approached, forty-two Vietnamese—women, children, and old men—appeared with empty hands raised. They were in desperate shape, hungry and sick, and although Kerry received radio instructions to leave them and get on with the business of killing enemy combatants, he herded the villagers onto boats and took them to the nearest American base to receive food and medical care. "For an afternoon," he told Brinkley, "it felt good to really be helping the Vietnamese instead of destroying their villages."

Even before he volunteered for Vietnam, Kerry had begun to question the wisdom of the war, and, in a photograph of the pinning ceremony when he received the Bronze Star, he appears in his stiff dress whites and peaked cap, with his chin held high, his mouth turned downward in a grimace, and his eyes fixed far away, as if he were bracing himself for the stab of an inoculation. Two years later, Kerry began his antiwar testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by recounting hearings that the Vietnam Veterans Against the War had recently held in Detroit, where "many very highly decorated veterans testified to war crimes committed in Southeast Asia." These crimes, Kerry said, were committed "on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command." To hear these veterans' stories, he said, was to understand "the absolute horror of what this country, in a sense, made them do":

> At times they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in a fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war and the normal and very particular ravaging which is done by the applied bombing power of this country.

That same week, on "Meet the Press," Kerry said:

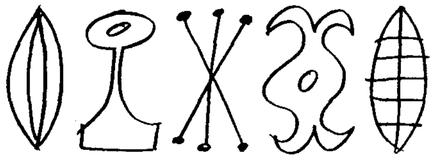
> I committed the same kind of atrocities as thousands of other soldiers have committed in that I took part in shootings in free fire zones. I conducted harassment and interdiction fire. I used .50-calibre machine guns, which we were granted and ordered to use, which were our only weapon against people. I took part in search and destroy missions, in the burning of villages. All of this is contrary to the laws of warfare, all of this is contrary to the Geneva Conventions and all of this is ordered as a matter of written established policy by the government of the United States from the top down. And I believe that the men who designed these, the men who designed the free fire zone, the men who ordered us, the men who signed off the air raid strike areas, I think these men, by the letter of the law, the same letter of the law that tried Lieutenant Calley, are war criminals.

A few months ago, Kerry again appeared on "Meet the Press," where Tim Russert replayed that thirty-three-year-old clip and asked, "You committed atrocities?" Kerry said he regretted the word: "a bad word," he called it, "an inappropriate word." Such language reflected the anger of the time, he explained, "and I don't like it when I hear it today." But he did not disavow the underlying judgment. "It was honest," he said. He knew that his critics took his remarks as a blanket condemnation of anyone who had served in Vietnam, and of America itself, and he told Russert, "I want you to notice that, at the end, I wasn't talking about the soldiers and the soldiers' blame, and my great regret is, I hope no soldier—I mean, I think some soldiers were angry at me for that, and I understand that and I regret that, because I love them." When Russert declared that a lot of the stories of hideous criminality that Kerry recounted in his Senate testimony "had been discredited," Kerry cut him off: "Actually, a lot of them have been documented." After a moment, he said, "Have some been discredited? Sure, they have." But Kerry remained proud of having taken a stand and of the stand he took. "I think we saved lives," he said.

The length of Kerry's answer, with its convolutions, qualifications, and repetitions, obscured the logic of his argument. This has been a persistent problem for him. While his habit of hedging may reflect an agile mind eager to preëmpt any possible misunderstandings, even those close to him complain that it can make his most consistent statements sound inconsistent. "John is substantively more sure-footed than he is politically adept," Joseph Biden, a longtime friend and colleague of Kerry's on the Foreign Relations Committee, told me. Another Kerry adviser said, "He talks Senate-speak, which is confusing." Biden, who prefers to think that being a senator and being clear are not mutually contradictory propositions, said, "My plea to John is: 'John, I don't want to hear you explain another fucking thing. Be declarative.' And he'll say to me, 'Well, I'll say it and explain it.' I say, 'Don't explain it! Say it! Question and answer, period.' " Kerry's ability to deliver swift, unambiguous statements has improved in the course of the campaign, and for now the controversy of his antiwar speeches has died down. In fact, the issue vanished abruptly from the news as soon as the story of torture at Abu Ghraib prison broke.

Bob Kerrey, the former senator, who lost a leg in Vietnam and won a medal of honor, and has since acknowledged being involved in atrocities while on a mission there, admires John Kerry's advocacy against the war. "It was an act of courage," he told me. Given the passions of the time, he said, "I thank God the microphone wasn't on and recording everything I said when I was twenty-five years of age."

Samuel Popkin, a political scientist at the University of California at San Diego, remembers the effect of John Kerry's testimony in the Senate in 1971, as "second only to Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' " speech. Popkin had avoided the draft in an unusual manner, by going to Vietnam, in 1966, on a government-funded research grant to study village life during the war, and he had concluded, "The Communists are bad people, and it's better for Vietnam if we win than if we lose. But we're gonna lose, and it's not worth it for America." Still, he couldn't relate to the draft dodgers back home. When he heard Kerry's impassioned critique of the war, he said, "I was truly moved by being able to be antiwar without being anti-American. And I'm not very moved by most antiwar people, because they—not everybody, but many—were trying to make a moral principle out of cowardice. When somebody came and said, 'I've been hit three times and let's get out'—it's just different at that point. I'd never heard of Kerry before that. And it was extraordinary. It reminded me of those medieval agrarian revolts where they'd go to a nobleman and say 'Speak for us.' "



Later, when Popkin was living in Boston and studying American political campaigns—work that led to his classic book "The Reasoning Voter"—he met Kerry at several dinners, and his reaction was "Where's the fire?" He found Kerry to be "powerful, thoughtful, but not crisp, and lacking in relaxed warmth." On reflection, this made sense to Popkin. "That's a thing about real warriors and great generals who are definitely very cool under fire," he said. "True heroes aren't flamboyant hyperbolists like the Ollie North types who look like they're ready to fly off. Real warriors are often more like chess players than like steroid-crazy defensive linemen. They're cold, quiet types, who only wake up when they have to act."

Popkin argues that Kerry's heroism in Vietnam, and the courage of his conviction in his Senate testimony—particularly when compared with Bush's avoidance of the war, and his absenteeism from the Texas Air National Guard—is more important to the campaign than the particulars of his position on Iraq, because voters know what they think about Vietnam and remain confused by Iraq. "I want to know that, if push comes to shove, this guy's going to do the right thing," Popkin said. In his view, Vietnam is "a character magnifier," and, just as Kerry's war record can only help him, Bush's can only hurt. "He's been President for four years, so why does something he said about the National Guard matter? Here's the answer: if you have doubts about now, that magnifies the doubts. It's really easier to divorce him if you find out that he wasn't honest in the first place—or if he's having trouble paying you back and you find out he was bankrupt once."

Rand Beers served with the Marines in Vietnam, and he has served as a foreign-policy or national-security officer under every President since Richard Nixon. In August of 2002, the Bush Administration named Beers Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Combating Terrorism on the National Security Council, a post he'd held under Ronald Reagan and the first President Bush. This was a version of the job that had previously been held by Beers's good friend Richard Clarke, who is now famous as the author of "Against All Enemies," the best-selling exposé of Bush's Iraq and terrorism policies. Within a few months of his assignment, Beers concluded, as Clarke did also, that the Administration's focus on Iraq was sapping its attention to the war on terrorism and the demands of homeland security. But his alarm at the resurgence of warlordism in the former Al Qaeda strongholds of Afghanistan was ignored, and on the eve of the invasion of Iraq he resigned from the White House "in opposition to the war" and, he told me, "because I wanted to be part of changing the regime" in Washington. "We were supposed to be facing the most important enemy that we had, Al Qaeda, and we were moving off of that." Beers soon had a new job, as the top foreign-policy and national-security man on the Kerry campaign.

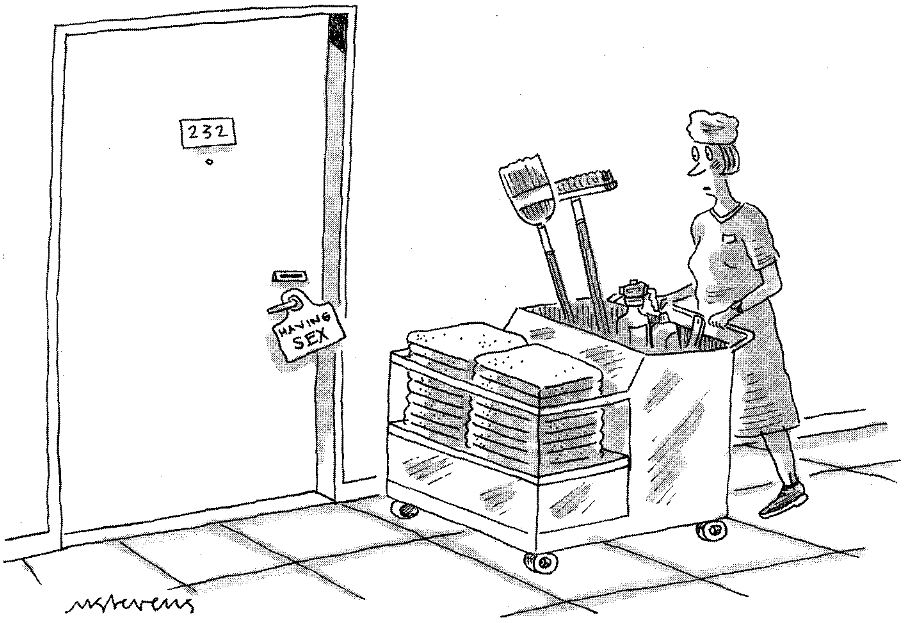
Beers had admired Kerry's work in the Senate on the Iran-Contra investigation, on narco-terrorism, and on the restoration of relations with Vietnam. But he was especially encouraged by the speed with which Kerry began to question the Bush Administration's dedication to fighting Al Qaeda after September 11th. Kerry was among the first public figures, in 2002, to charge that Bush had not matched his action to his rhetoric in pursuing Osama bin Laden but had in fact let him slip away in the Tora Bora region of Afghanistan, where American commanders hired tribal fighters of dubious allegiance to pursue him instead of sending in our Special Forces. ("After all the chest-thumping, and commitment of America to avenge what happened and to capture Osama bin Laden, we were timid—to say the least—at Tora Bora, and in our response," Kerry told me.) "We didn't know then what we know now" about Bush's eagerness to shift the theatre of war to Iraq, Beers said, but Kerry's "prescient" recognition that the fight against Al Qaeda was being neglected convinced him that Kerry was the man to back against Bush. As it turned out, Beers said, "Iraq, for better or worse, has become part of the war on terrorism if only because it is an inspiration to Al Qaeda in its recruitment efforts." But he told me, "At the same time, we're going to have to figure out how to strengthen the war on terrorism more broadly, which is why we come back to that central point, which is, we have to find a way to bring more of the world into this part of the struggle."

Beers's prominent position in the campaign reflects Kerry's desire not to allow Iraq to define the limits of the foreign-policy debate. In late May and early June, Kerry gave a series of speeches about national security, in which his focus was pointedly on areas that have been eclipsed by Iraq: nuclear proliferation, homeland security, and the expansion and transformation of the military. In these speeches and on the stump, Kerry rarely speaks directly of the September 11th attacks, cutting a strong contrast to Bush, for whom that was the date when "everything changed," an all-defining political conversion experience that serves as the equivalent of his renunciation of alcohol in favor of Christianity. What was destroyed for Bush on that day was all that came before, and he seemed to welcome the destruction as if it filled a great void. Afterward, he joked that he could now increase the national deficit. War, recession, national emergency, he said: "Lucky me, I hit the trifecta."

Bush's three-horse apocalypse set him free; as a "war President" he has felt justified in doing whatever he likes and nothing he doesn't care to. But the immediate popular heroes of September 11th were the firemen and emergency medical technicians, whose national unions have both endorsed Kerry. That day was truly "a central moment," Kerry said to me, but he added, "There are certain rules of behavior and standards of relationships that have served us for centuries, which didn't change. The need to be strong through alliances didn't change. The need to be strong through a military that is well equipped and second to nobody in the world in its execution and capacity to meet the challenge of the moment didn't change."

Kerry went on, "I think this Administration has made America less safe in the world generally. . . . They haven't transformed the military the way they should've. Our troops are overextended." The Pentagon's policy of forcing National Guard and reserve troops to remain on active duty after completing their tours amounts to "a back-door draft," he said. In the meantime, "we haven't contained the loose nuclear materials we should've in Russia. How are we safer with so much nuclear material available to terrorists? I think if you just measure these threats—go around the nation, ask hospitals if they're prepared for an emergency bioterror attack—there are inexcusable, glaring deficiencies." There was no reason for America to be so weak, and it was not just a question of military defense. The country needed to "unleash the full panoply of weapons in our arsenal, which includes our economic assistance—economic clout—our aid programs, our Peace Corps, our ideas, our values, our health care, our technology." Winning the war of ideas is a challenge, Kerry said, "but it's not a clash of civilizations. It's a clash of civilization vs. uncivilization."

Kerry's litany of all that the Bush Administration has ignored is very nearly as big as the world: China's rise as a huge power, Russia's uncertain transition, Iran's nuclear program, and North Korea's unchecked accumulation of atomic bombs. Ronald Reagan was willing to sit down with Gorbachev and work for disarmament. "Did the Russians cheat?" Kerry said. "You're damn right they did. Did we continue to talk to them? You're damn right we did. Did we eventually get to a more intrusive verification? You bet we did. And ultimately that's how you go



down the road." But Bush abandoned comparable efforts with North Korea because, he claimed, he didn't want to reward bad behavior. Now Pyongyang was "moving in the other direction, building a new round of nuclear weapons, scrapping treaties, and literally sending messages that they'll do whatever they want," Kerry said. "That is not a way to create a safer world."

Where was America? Kerry kept asking. Why doesn't the Secretary of State spend more time on airplanes? "Get out front," he said. The Israelis and the Palestinians need help: "This Administration disengaged for fourteen straight months in an unprecedented fashion, allowing the Middle East to sort of spiral down." Kerry acknowledged that America has "a special relationship with Israel," and that "the fact is Israel has no negotiating party today" on the Palestinian side. But he said, "I believe we should have been consistently engaged. I think we should be engaged in economic transformation. We should be engaged in more direct efforts with the Saudi Arabians, the Egyptians, and the other countries to develop that entity that Israel can deal with, to stop the support for Hamas, Hezbollah, the Al Aqsa Brigade, and to be legitimate. And to do that you've got to be viewed as willing to be an honest broker."

After thirty-five years in public life, Kerry is still very much a work in progress, as anyone who dares to be President must be, until he is defeated or retires. He is also uneven, alternating between intensely focussed discipline and lucidity and phases of vagueness, when he goes into a sort of battery-saver mode. "John always hits the long ball when he's ready to call it, and he's always capable of rising to the occasion," his friend George Butler told me. "But in a curious kind of way he does play possum in the unimportant moments, almost as a way to divert people's attention from his ultimate goal." Every politician claims to prefer it when the punditry "misunderestimates" him, as President Bush put it, but John Kerry didn't appear to be enjoying it a bit in December, when he was getting slaughtered in the polls, and even members of his staff shook their heads when he pronounced himself "a good closer." Anthony Trollope, writing about love and politics, observed, "Men are never gentle in their triumph." But there was no mistaking the sweetness Kerry was savoring on primary night after primary night this year as he embraced his wife, Teresa, at his victory parties.

Shortly after his Senate testimony on Vietnam, in 1971, Kerry was featured in a segment of "60 Minutes," titled "First Hurrah," during which he was asked if he wanted to be President. "Of the United States?" Kerry said. "No. That's such a crazy question." But he has wanted to be where he is, running for President in an epochal election, for a very long time, and the ferocious contest he finds himself in is well suited to him, not because he likes combat, exactly, but because in combat he tends to handle himself well. Of course, as he knows, many good soldiers have fallen in battle.

"It seems to me that John Kerry is as perfect an embodiment of our national passage since 1965 as John F. Kennedy was for an earlier generation," Richard Holbrooke told me. "John F. Kennedy and George Bush senior were good heroes in a good war. Kerry was a good hero in a bad war, and then turned against the war. Ever since then, he has stood for a committed internationalist foreign policy. He believes in American values passionately, and he also believes in the limits of military power, and in its application when necessary. John Kerry is normally a cautious person, except that every once in a while he does these amazing things, like turning his Swift boat right at his Vietcong attackers. He is both careful and fearless, cautious when he approaches an issue, and then very decisive. He's not scared of head-on confrontation." But Holbrooke said, "This is a referendum on Bush and Iraq. We've got a long way to go to the election, and three undetermined events are key here—what happens in Iraq, whether we kill or capture bin Laden, and whether or not there is a terrorist attack in the United States."

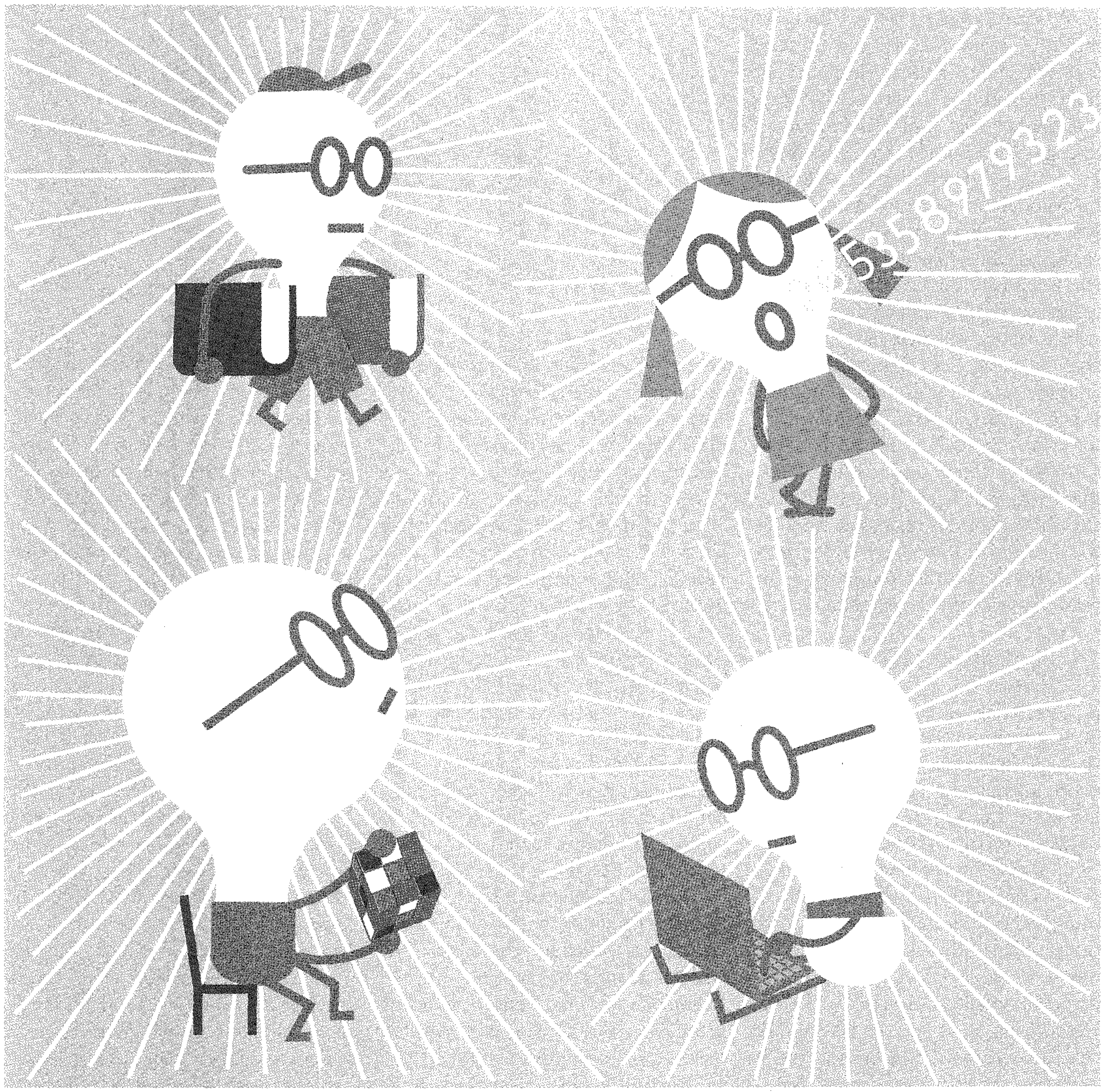
Kerry doesn't disagree, although he told me, "No matter what happens, the economy is going to be important. But I think these guys—what they're trying to do to me reflects their bankruptcy of ideas. They don't have a real economic plan, except for the tax cut. They don't have a real health-care plan. They don't have a plan for education, except the broken promise of 'No Child Left Behind.' So, therefore, what do they do? They attack, they attack, they attack, they attack. And I will continue to talk throughout this campaign about foreign policy and the war on terror and how to make America more secure." That was the bottom line, he said: "I think we can do better. I know we can do better. I absolutely know we can do better." By John Kerry's own assessment, doing better is a woefully low standard—and that, he told me, was precisely what made him run for President. "I just said, 'This has gotta stop.' " ♦

ANNALS OF CHILDHOOD

NERD CAMP

How do you find America's brightest kids, and what do you do with them for the summer?

BY BURKHARD BILGER



RICHARD McGUIRE

Another Saturday afternoon, and time again for Mandatory Fun. The High Math boys were sprawled on a patch of grass in front of their dormitory, waiting glumly for the games to begin. It was summer in Baltimore, and the wettest spring in memory had left the lawns at Johns Hopkins University deep green and as soft as velvet. Halfway across the quad, some High Verbals were waving banners in the sun, babbling excitedly and chasing one another around with high-pitched squeals. Michael Scarito watched them for a moment and yawned. Then he turned to his friend Andrew Hunter. "There must be a wireless network around here somewhere, but I can't seem to hook into it," he said. "Maybe it's encrypted." Hunter looked up from his fantasy novel and smirked. "If that were true, you'd still be able to pick it up with your Wi-Fi card."

On sunny days like this, the Center for Talented Youth—or nerd camp, as most of the attendees called it—could almost pass for some Indian-themed summer camp in the Catskills. But Scarito and Hunter weren't your typical campers. Scarito, at fifteen, was already a licensed computer technician. Two years ago, he had installed a server for his mother's medical office, in York, Pennsylvania. ("They got quotes from Dell and Gateway, but he way underbid them," his father told me.) Hunter, who was also fifteen, was an avid programmer who helped administer his high school's computers. Sitting on the grass side by side, they looked like a young Laurel and Hardy: Scarito short and stout, with thick black locks hanging in front of his eyes; Hunter tall and knobby, with buzz-cut hair and eyebrows screwed into a look of perpetual disbelief.

Like the other High Math boys, Scarito and Hunter were here to study engineering, and they had run a gantlet of tests for the privilege. The center accepts only the top one per cent of all students—those who score as well on the S.A.T. in junior high as the average student does as a high-school senior—and not every camper is accepted with equal enthusiasm. Some qualify only for humanities courses, some only for math or science courses, and some score so high (above 700 on the math or verbal portion before the age of thirteen) that they take part in a long-term project, the Study of Exceptional Talent.

The boys on the lawn were among the top math scorers at the center. They had spent the past two weeks building cardboard mousetraps and spaghetti bridges, measuring the strength of uncooked pasta in compression and testing girder designs with a truss calculator. They had relished sitting through six-hour daily classes, doing a college semester's work in three weeks. They just couldn't get their minds around Mandatory Fun.

Today's event was the Woohoo! Olympics. Any minute now, the head resident would come charging out of camp headquarters, bearing a mock torch of black and orange chiffon. Then the students would spend three hours competing in sack races, water-balloon tosses, hula-hoop contests, and tugs-of-war.

Only later, in one of the dorms, while the rest of his team was busy playing Ping-Pong and pool, would Scarito find what he was seeking. "Check this out," he murmured, shuffling past Hunter with a twisted smile.

They made their way to the back of the room, shoulders slumped with suspicious nonchalance. When they reached what looked like a closet, Scarito glanced around at the other campers, then opened the door a crack. Inside, a tall bank of sleek machinery stood behind tinted glass, flickering with green L.E.D.s in the darkness: the fabled computer router. They gazed at it in silence, their minds racing. "If we can find a D.H.C.P. server, we can finally get on the Internet," Scarito said. "But I might have to manually reconfigure my card." Hunter grinned; if anyone knew how to do that, it would be someone at nerd camp.

Bright kids are used to fending for themselves in America. Dweeb, dork, brainiac, nerd: to be young and brilliant here is almost always to be a figure of some derision, to accept isolation as a condition of existence. Americans are phenomenally good at finding and nurturing certain kinds of talent. By the time they're ten, the best athletes have been handpicked from peewee leagues and sent to sport clinics and travelling teams. By the time they're twelve, the members of the future varsity know exactly who they are. True athleticism is a rare and natural-born gift, we believe, so we lavish resources on our physical prodigies—and content ourselves with intramural leagues and summer softball.

Mental prodigies are another matter. In Park Slope, Brooklyn, where I live, parents are obsessed with their children's education, yet programs for the gifted are so meagre as to be nearly nonexistent. To qualify, children take an intelligence test at the age of four, then agree to be bused to whichever program will have them. But parents receive little official notice, so even those who are interested often don't apply. When my wife took my four-year-old son Hans to be tested a few years ago, at a run-down Board of Education building in nearby Sunset Park, they were ushered into a room full of nervous mothers drilling their children in their ABCs. After an hour or so, Hans was called in for a fifteen-minute interview. He was asked a few basic math questions, shown a picture and told to describe it from memory, and then sent home. Six months later, we were informed that he had passed the test, but that there were twice as many qualifiers as there were slots in the program. There had been a lottery, and his name hadn't been drawn.

The news came almost as a relief. Programs for the gifted tend to arouse suspicion in most parents I know. They've heard all about the cultural biases in intelligence testing. They aren't surprised to hear that affluent students outnumber poor students by a large margin in classes for the gifted. The whole notion of giftedness is outdated, many say: as I.Q. has splintered into multiple intelligences—logical, linguistic, interpersonal, and so on—it has become fashionable to claim that every student is gifted in some way. Under the circumstances, sending a child to a gifted program is evidence of either prejudice or preciousness: just another yuppie who thinks his child is a genius.

The same egalitarian ardor has swept over schools across the country in recent years, slashing gifted classes and dismantling tracking systems. Programs for the gifted now receive less than two cents of every hundred dollars spent on education by the federal government, and gifted students typically begin the school year already knowing thirty-five to fifty per cent of the basic curriculum. Yet despite this trend—or, rather, because of it—a kind of parallel universe has emerged, a sprawling network of enrichment classes, camps for the gifted, and tutors determined to help children find their inner genius. Just down the street from my son's elementary school, a business called Score! promises to help students leap grade levels in reading and math. In advertisements, programs proffer their wares in the hyperbolic language of exercise gurus: "Welcome to the World of the Visuospatial Learner!"; "Unleash Your Child's 'Gifted' Potential!" Seventy-five to eighty per cent of all newborn babies are potentially gifted, the latter ad notes. "You, as a parent, have only six years to take advantage of this 'Window of Opportunity.' "

The Center for Talented Youth is the unofficial headquarters for this movement. When the psychologist Julian Stanley founded it at Johns Hopkins in 1972, it was known as the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth and occupied a single classroom. Today, the center oversees a Mensa-ready cohort of more than twenty-five thousand students, from the ages of five through fifteen, drawn from nearly a quarter of a million candidates nationwide. Students who qualify are roughly divided into geographic groups and invited to apply to camps and courses that are run independently by four universities: Johns Hopkins in the Northeast, Duke in the Southeast, Northwestern in the Midwest, and the University of Denver in the West. To the schools that host them, the gifted camps are partly recruiting tools and partly a way to fill idle summer campuses. To Stanley, they are a subversive meritocracy. "We take a benignly insidious approach," he told me. "We set precedents. Johnny needs Algebra I, but his school won't let him take it, because he's too young. So we sit down with his guidance counsellors and say, 'Look, he's already done pre-algebra this summer.' Then, once Johnny is allowed to take the class, other mothers can say, 'Well, if Johnny can take it, why not Jimmy?' "

On summer mornings, when the center's prodigies cross paths with phalanxes of sturdy lacrosse campers, they remind you of nothing so much as H. G. Wells's "The Time Machine"—only with the roles reversed. Here, students in the physical classes cavort in the sunshine, while their more ethereal counterparts pass most of their days underground, in basement rooms lit with flickering fluorescent lights. In the math classes that I visited, the students worked at their own pace, spending six hours a day with just a textbook, a calculator, and a pencil, and raising their hands only when they hit a snag. The theory of the class, I was told, was that if teachers don't try to set the pace their students will eventually outrun them, like greyhounds lapping the rabbit at a racetrack. It seemed to be working: according to his math teacher, one boy had completed a year's worth of algebra in the first week.

"Are you familiar with Freud's theory of personality?" a twelve-year-old named Jesse Mirotznik asked me one day. He was studying psychology at the camp and had come up with a few improvements on the Viennese model. "I don't believe in the preconscious," he said. "I don't think there's anything about it that you can't fit into the conscious and the subconscious. Also, in my theory there's no ego, but the id is divided into two parts: the hedona, which is for immediate gratification, and the optima, which is for long-term goals." A few months before, he said, he'd been in Federico García Lorca's play "The Butterfly's Evil Spell" and he had forgotten the last lines of his closing monologue. "Now my hedona doesn't want me to go onstage anymore, because it's not pleasurable, and my optima is worried that the audience might hurt me. So I guess they're in agreement."

We were sitting in the camp cafeteria, having dinner with a couple of High Verbals from the logic and history classes. Mirotznik, who is from Brooklyn, was wearing a T-shirt that read "Do Not Disturb. I'm Disturbed Enough Already." He had wide, keen eyes and milk-jug ears, braces on his upper teeth, and a sweetly solicitous manner. Wherever I saw him on campus, he was surrounded by giggling girls, whispering confidences in his ears. And though he could sound pretentious sometimes, he had a winning sincerity about him. Mirotznik liked words; he liked people; and he was well aware that the two don't always mix.

"I've tried to gear down my vocabulary," he said. "But I still get a hard time. Anti-intellectualism is really popular in America." Before coming to the center, he'd spent two disastrous summers at a sports-oriented camp in Pennsylvania called Island Lake. "I hated it," he said. "It was not a stimulating environment. I took boxing, and I was very afraid." Back home, Mirotznik attends a private school that offers a strong academic program. I asked him what he would do if he had to go to school with the kids from Island Lake. "I don't know," he said. "I would probably get more into sports and less into thinking." He paused. "Or maybe I would just be very, very unpopular."

Across the table, Lily Berger and her brother Ben laughed. They were fourteen-year-old twins, born six minutes apart, and had the same pale skin, flaxen hair, and liquid eyes. But while Ben was quiet and watchful, Lily could barely contain herself. She was learning French, Arabic, and Mandarin in her spare time, as well as Hebrew and Spanish at school. Earlier that day, I'd watched Lily and her classmates grapple with symbolic logic in their philosophy course. The teacher, a baby-faced Georgetown graduate student named Bill McGeehan, ambled around the room in sandals and a Leonardo da Vinci T-shirt, a look of carefully calibrated enthusiasm on his face. "O.K., O.K., one idea at a time."

At one point, McGeehan went to the blackboard and sketched out a complicated logic tree—a diagram of the branching paths of a logical argument. "Oh, my God!" Lily blurted out, collapsing back in her chair as she grasped its significance. Within a few minutes, though, she was ready to move on. "You don't want to do any more logic trees?" McGeehan asked.

"Well . . . I *get* it."

McGeehan told me later that he had never taught such students before. "In terms of seriousness, in terms of rate of comprehension, it is beyond belief how much better they are than the average class at Georgetown. Teaching them is kind of like driving a Mercedes." McGeehan was once something of a prodigy himself. Ordinary classes moved at such a "glacial pace" for him, he said, that he spent much of his time forging notes to get out of school. "I graduated with something like a 2.3 average. If I hadn't rocked the S.A.T.s, I'd still be working in a butcher shop." Still, the camp's social life would have meant even more to him than its classes. "I spent a lot of years not being the alpha male, I can tell you that. It would have been nice to come to a place like this and not be at the very bottom of the social ladder. It may be nerd camp, but nerd camp is a wonderful thing," he said.

After dinner that night, as Lily was walking back to the dorm, she told me that she and her father had memorized the first hundred and eight digits of pi, and that they used to recite them together for fun. She paused under a street lamp and took a deep breath: "3.141592-65358979323846264338327950288419716939937510 . . ." The digits clipped by at such a pace that they initially sounded like gibberish. Then Lily slowly found her rhythm. As the beat fell first on one digit and then on another, she found patterns in the sequence and accented them like arpeggios, until the performance took on a headlong, incantatory quality—half Dizzy Gillespie and half “Rite of Spring.” When she was done, she looked exalted and a little embarrassed. “Last year, the kids here used to call me Pi Girl,” she said. “Then I taught another boy the numbers and they started calling him Pi Boy.” She laughed. “I'm kind of the dork wherever I go.”

Lily lives just north of Baltimore, in a split-level suburban house. Her father is a cardiologist at the Johns Hopkins Medical School, her mother a former college administrator. In the evenings, when debates over ethics and feminism flare around the dinner table, the household can seem like something out of “Franny and Zooey”: Ben calls Lily an iconoclast, then their father calls Ben a philistine, to which Ben replies with a ten-minute disquisition on the excellence of Philistine culture in the second millennium B.C. When friends come over for the first time, Lily says, they sometimes leave a little stunned.

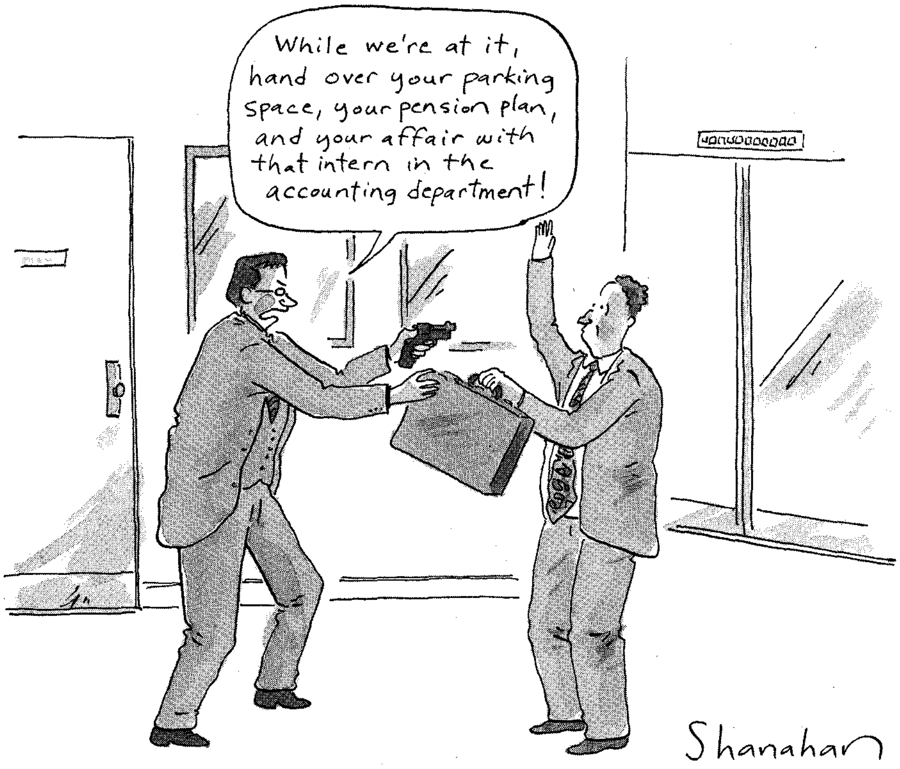
Lily showed the usual signs of precocity: learning the alphabet by the age of two, reading novels in kindergarten. But it's hard, with High Verbals, to gauge the scale of their intellect. Language is a universal human gift, and the attribute that is most commonly shaped by its environment. (Had Henry Higgins turned Eliza Doolittle into a world-class mathematician, no one would have believed it.) The High Verbals I spoke with often credited their test scores to their upbringing. “Intelligence is less about knowing than about methods of thought,” a thirteen-year-old Egyptian named Amine told me, his fingertips tracing the beginnings of a beard. “Descartes said that others had greater minds than his, but that they accomplished less because their method was not as good.” Genes have something to do with intelligence, he admitted, but it's mostly a matter of supportive parents and good study habits.

Listening to Lily describe her home life, you could imagine that any child brought up in such a family might have a love of language and some skill at using it. And the same argument could be used to justify dismantling the gifted programs she loved. The educators who rail against tracking and the parents who shuttle their children to Score! seem to share an underlying belief: that a child's intelligence is largely a social construct, and that the right teacher, wielding the right tools, can galvanize even the most leaden lump of a mind. If gifted students have been favored by circumstance, then they ought to spread that good fortune around; the average class is sorely in need of students like Lily to set an example and keep teachers on their toes.

When Julian Stanley founded the Center for Talented Youth, thirty-two years ago, he wanted to have it both ways. Education for the gifted, he thought, was both too exclusive and not nearly discriminating enough. Stanley, who is eighty-six, has lived through most of the history of intelligence testing in America, and helped shape a good deal of it. In 1933, when he graduated from high school at fifteen, the Stanford-Binet I.Q. test had been around for a decade and a half and was popular in elementary schools. But the top universities relied on lengthy written exams, administered by the College Board, that were geared specifically to the curriculum at élite prep schools. It wasn't until the nineteen-forties, when the S.A.T. was popularized at the urging of the president of Harvard, James Bryant Conant, that universities began to draw on a larger pool.

The S.A.T. was developed in 1926 by Princeton psychologist Carl Brigham, based on a test developed for Army recruits. It measured mental acuity and basic understanding rather than specific knowledge of a topic, and because it was scored by machine it could be given on a vast scale. Almost from the beginning, the test served contradictory purposes. To Brigham, testing was a means of segregating the population. In his book, “A Study of American Intelligence,” he analyzed the test results of army recruits race by race. American education was sure to decline at “an accelerating rate,” he concluded, “as the racial mixture becomes more and more extensive.” Yet to Conant it was an instrument of egalitarianism: any student, no matter how poor or indifferently educated, could use it to gain admission to Harvard or Yale.

Stanley was an early champion of the test. He earned his Ph.D. in psychology at Harvard in the late nineteen-forties,


While we're at it, hand over your parking space, your pension plan, and your affair with that intern in the accounting department!
Shanahan

CAREER CRIMINAL

when the first scholarship students, chosen according to their S.A.T. scores, were attending the school. He went on to study statistics at the University of Chicago and eventually earned tenure at Johns Hopkins. In thirty years of psychometric research, he came to believe that intelligence is every bit as inborn as eye color, but that those who possess it need all the help they can get. He wasn't worried so much about the next Einstein—"minds like that come around only once every century or two"—as about all the garden-variety geniuses who go to seed. Tens of thousands of gifted students are never identified as such by their schools, he believed, and those who are identified get lumped together in the same gifted classes, instead of being taught to their specific strengths. "I used to think that I.Q. almost guaranteed success," Stanley told me. "But I found with bitter experience that it's not true. It can almost be a burden to you."

SHELLEY

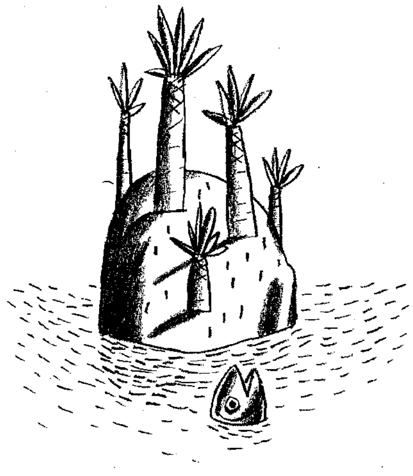
When I was twenty the one true
free spirit I had heard of was Shelley,
Shelley, who wrote tracts advocating
atheism, free love, the emancipation
of women, the abolition of wealth and class,
and poems on the bliss of romantic love,
Shelley, who, I learned later, perhaps
almost too late, remarried Harriet,
then pregnant with their second child,
and a few months later ran off with Mary,
already pregnant herself, bringing
with them Mary's stepsister Claire,
who very likely also became his lover,

and in this malaise à trois, which Shelley
had imagined would be "a paradise of exiles,"
they lived, along with the spectre of Harriet,
who drowned herself in the Serpentine,
and of Mary's half sister Fanny,

In 1969, a local boy named Joseph Bates was brought to Stanley's attention. Bates, at thirteen, was already teaching computer programming to graduate students. When Stanley gave him the S.A.T., he scored much higher in math than the typical high-school senior, yet no local school would allow him to take calculus or physics. "They said it was ridiculous—he was thirteen years old," Stanley recalls. Finally, Stanley persuaded Johns Hopkins to admit the boy as a freshman. "It was a desperation move," he says. "I thought he would do poorly in college." Instead, within four years Bates had earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in computer science, and had gone on to Cornell for his doctorate.

Almost inadvertently, Stanley had set a precedent. A year after Bates entered Johns Hopkins, a woman appeared at Stanley's office. She'd heard about this young prodigy from some friends in her bridge club, and she was certain that her son was every bit as bright. "She was kind of indignant," Stanley recalls. "So I gave her son the test, and he went to Hopkins at thirteen, too." By 1972, four hundred and fifty students were being tested, and Stanley had to set up a special course at the university for the twenty or so who passed. By 1980, he had begun to track the fortunes of the most gifted among the gifted—known as "the 1-in-10,000," because their test scores were in the top one-hundredth of one per cent nationwide. The talent search had begun.

Stanley has officially been retired for five years, but he still keeps an office at the Center for Talented Youth and comes in twice a week. When I visited him there, he was getting ready for a luncheon with five seventh graders who had scored perfect 800s on the S.A.T. He had on a dove-gray suit that hung loosely on his tall, craggy frame, and his deep-set eyes peered out from behind thick-framed black glasses and beneath bushy brows. Stanley's colleagues often call him a Southern gentleman (he was born near Atlanta), but his roots are less apparent in his voice, which has grown papery and faint with age, than in his elegant, homespun diction. One minute, he'll talk about "studying the gifted animal in its native habitat"; the next, he'll say that education is a matter of improvisation, that "there are more ways to kill a cat than to choke it on butter."



After three decades of scouting for prodigies, Stanley has a keen sense of how many brilliant students still slip through his grasp. Three-quarters of those who might qualify for the camps are never tested, he estimates, and some that should qualify don't. The S.A.T. can't discern the visual and spatial gifts that make for great architects and engineers, for instance. Many of the rest simply can't afford the tuition. The Johns Hopkins program costs twenty-six hundred dollars for a three-week session, including room and board. Four years ago, Goldman Sachs donated three and a half million dollars to sponsor financially needy students, but blacks and Hispanics still represent only ten per cent of the campers. "Cost is our Achilles' heel," Stanley says.

Others, like Joseph Renzulli, say that the problem goes deeper. Renzulli is the director of the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, a federally funded think tank in Storrs, Connecticut. "Bright kids taking courses on college campuses has become a cottage

who killed herself, maybe for unrequited
love of Shelley, and with the spirits
of adored but often neglected
children conceived incidentally
in the pursuit of Eros—Harriet's
Ianthe and Charles, denied to Shelley
and consigned to foster parents; Mary's
Clara, dead at one; her Willmouse,
Shelley's favorite, dead at three; Elena,
the baby in Naples, almost surely
Shelley's own, whom he "adopted"
and then left behind, dead at one and a half;
Allegra, Claire's daughter by Byron,
whom Byron sent off to the convent
at Bagnacavallo at four, dead at five—

and in those days, before I knew
any of this, I thought I followed Shelley,
who thought he was following radiant desire.

—*Galway Kinnell*

industry," he says. "But to me it's just lesson-learning. It's teachers presenting information for students to get the right answers. The thing is, we don't build monuments to people who were good at lesson learning." Genius is a matter of passion as well as intelligence, I was told by Howard Gardner, the Harvard psychologist who originated the theory of multiple intelligences. If society really wants to find the next Einstein, teachers should stop asking which students are the brightest and start asking which are the most eccentric and single-minded. "Who is the oddest ball here? Who's collecting rocks or reading the encyclopedia backward from Z to A? They're the ones who are most likely to end up in the history books."

The gifted camps, for better or worse, take a more statistical approach. Stanley knows that the S.A.T., like a Gallup poll, is a fairly crude predictor when taken alone. Its strength lies in numbers. Last year alone, more than a hundred thousand seventh and eighth graders were given the test. The top scorers tended to be both sharp-witted and intellectually motivated; they had mastered the material without ever learning it in school. Had the same hundred thousand taken the test as high-school seniors, a fair number would have had perfect scores and it would have been impossible to differentiate among them. By catching them early, the gifted camps were able to rank them across a broad continuum and take the best of the best. "Of course, there's some regression toward the mean," Colin Camerer, a behavioral economist at Caltech, told me. "If you take all the No. 1 draft picks in basketball, not every one of them will make it to the Hall of Fame—too many things can go wrong. But a greater percentage will than if you took all the forty-second draft picks."

Camerer, who is forty-four, is one of the oldest alumni of the Johns Hopkins program, and the first member of the Study of Exceptional Talent. He met Stanley in 1970, when he was in the fifth grade in Baltimore, and at Stanley's urging skipped four grades in the next three years. "It's the LeBron James approach," he says, referring to the N.B.A. phenom. "They just throw you into the big leagues." Being a fourteen-year-old junior in high school wasn't easy, though he looked older than his age, because of early hair loss. But college came as a relief. "Part of the point of acceleration is to get you into a warmer environment, where people can appreciate you," he says. "Geeks are more comfortable being geeks in college." By the time he was in his early twenties, Camerer had earned an M.B.A. and then a Ph.D. in economics. By his thirties, he had tenure at Caltech, a university full of former prodigies.

Camerer's career is not unusual for a High Math. We know this because he and some six thousand other alumni have now been followed for nearly thirty years, first by Stanley and then by one of his protégés, Camilla Benbow, the dean of education and human development at Vanderbilt University. Benbow and her husband, David Lubinski, a psychologist at Vanderbilt, send out periodic questionnaires and track their subjects' achievements year by year. Recently, they compared Camerer's cohort—the 1-in-10,000—to a group that merely scored in the top one per cent. "There were huge differences," Benbow says. "Huge." By the age of thirty, the 1-in-10,000 were twice as likely to earn Ph.D.s as the other cohort, and fifty times more likely to earn Ph.D.s than the average American. "And they go to much more prestigious schools," she added. "The top one per cent achieve enormous amounts, but the 1-in-10,000 do even better."

It's too early to tell how many of the 1-in-10,000 will become Nobel Prize winners. But a few, like Camerer, are already leaders in their field, and the rest have proved surprisingly predictable. Lubinski showed me a series of graphs based on gifted students' S.A.T. scores. In college, those with high verbal and low math scores mostly majored in the social sciences and humanities; those with high math and low verbal scores gravitated toward math and engineering. Students with high scores in both areas often studied physics; those with equally low scores drifted into business. By the age of thirty-three, when the students had become professionals, physicians occupied the center of the graph—good but not great in both math and language. And lawyers had joined businesspeople in the bottom quarter.

Even the 1-in-10,000 have their share of disappointments, of course: some reply to the questionnaires with requests for money. Others simply find better things to do than change the world. For most of them, being one of the 1-in-10,000 eventually becomes more of an embarrassment than a point of pride, Camerer says. But, then, great minds have always had to be as resilient as they are resourceful. "You just have to have enough psychological strength to deal with it," Lubinski says. "When you make these huge jumps in ability, you just have to try to live with the fact that you're twelve years old."

The High Math boys were trying their hardest, but their usual methods of analysis weren't helping.

"I know a 4.9 back home."

"No, you don't."

"Trust me. I do."

"No, you don't."

Scarito, Hunter, and the rest were sitting in the cafeteria after lunch, killing time before the next class, talking about girls. The engineering course was nearly all male, as were most of the math and computer classes at the camp, and its members—unlike Jesse Mirotznik—seemed at a loss when dealing with the opposite sex. I'd never seen any of them talk to a girl on campus, and they tended to herd together in public, horns out, like musk oxen on the tundra. Misha, a scrappy little engineer with a modest pompadour, had devised a rating system from zero to five for any females they spotted in the distance.

"I'm telling you, it's physically impossible that you know a 4.9," Scarito told Hunter. "Girls that are rated that high, they basically have this reverse magnetic field around them. When you approach them, they fly backward."

There was a longish pause as the others considered this. Then Scarito sighed. "I've been away from the cube too long."

The Rubik's Cube was a kind of rosary to Scarito—a perfect outlet for his nervous mental energy. His record for solving the puzzle was a minute and fifteen seconds, and by now he could almost do it blindfolded. He would glance at the opening configuration once or twice, then flip through a standard sequence of moves without looking down again. Like more than a few of the campers, Scarito had attention deficit disorder, but he said it never bothered him when he did things he enjoyed. "Just sitting in class the other day, I wrote a program in my head for displaying fractals." Hunter said that he probably had A.D.D., too, though it had never been diagnosed. "It's not so bad being jumpy," he said. "People like us can pretty much do four things at once. The problem is finding the balance between them." Sometimes at school, he said, he paid very close attention to three different things but forgot to listen to the teacher.

The High Math boys were more willing than the High Verbals to say that their intelligence was innate—perhaps because it marked them so deeply. "When you meet some of these incredibly gifted students, you could really believe that they are of a different species," Robert Plomin, a psychologist at King's College, London, who is studying the genetics of intelligence, told me. And it was true that Hunter and Scarito stood out whether they wanted to or not. When Scarito spoke, ideas seemed to course through him like electricity. He arched his back and twisted his shoulders, waving his hands in front of him as if willing the current to subside. Hunter was so quick and bracingly blunt that he was often taken for rude.

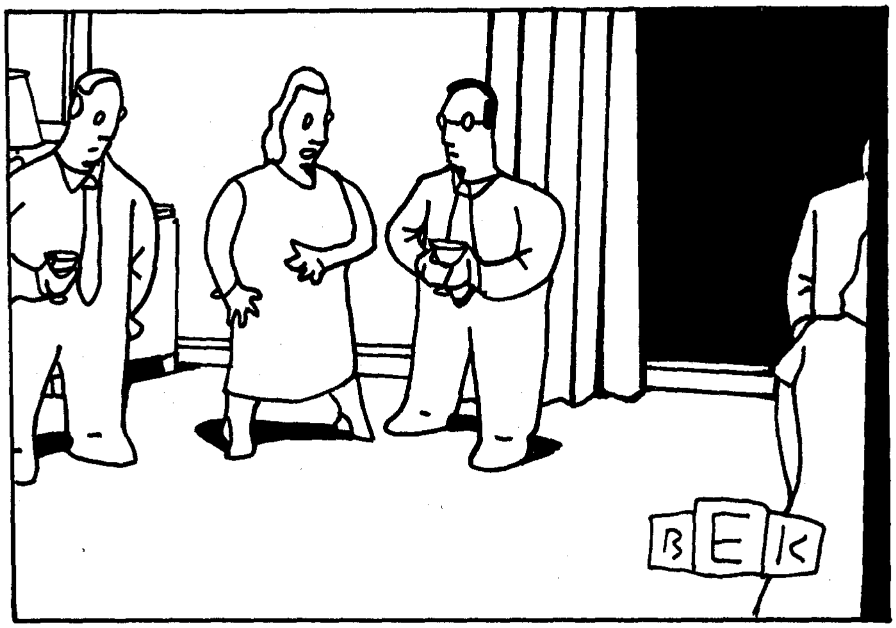
"And now here's another ditty from the imperialist Yankee dogs, bubbling just under the Hot One Hundred."

"It's not like I'm beaten up or ostracized or anything," Hunter said, when I asked him about the public school he attended, in Northampton, Massachusetts. "But I often feel like I don't belong." At the camp, he said, he could walk into the lunchroom anytime and start a debate about Kantian ethics versus utilitarianism. "At my school, about the only thing we debate is which video game is better, 'Counter-Strike' or 'Unreal Tournament.'" As for Scarito, he had spent part of grade school in math classes of one, learning algebra and geometry by the fifth grade, while the rest did long division.

What they all wanted, it seemed, was what Tim Hsieh had. Hsieh was the smallest boy in the group and the least talkative. He wore glasses and had delicate Chinese features and a way of answering every question with a startled grin, as if he hadn't expected you to notice him. He attended a public school in Hollywood with a small program for the highly gifted, all of whom had to have a minimum I.Q. of 145. It sounded like exactly the kind of place that exceptionally gifted students need. But when I asked Hsieh what he thought of his school he gave an embarrassed shrug, then said, "I don't like the community that much. It's full of dull people concentrating on academics."

The students at Hsieh's school were mostly Asian, and their parents had a strong hand in their education. "Everybody fits in the same mold," he said. "Even their appearance. They're all workaholics. They always play the violin or the piano—or both. And they don't have any other hobbies." Perhaps it was a matter of how the students were chosen ("The I.Q.

test was designed to find mid-level bureaucrats to administer an empire," Howard Gardner told me), but he felt caught between the nerd stereotype and the Asian stereotype. Though he had tried to deviate from both, he didn't have much room to improvise: his parents insisted that he do at least two hours of homework every night. When I asked him what he was going to be when he grew up, he threw his hands in the air with a helpless smile. "An engineer, I guess."



"Oh, I'm sorry—this is George, the first person at this party I thought I was going to go home with."

That Friday, at a glass pavilion near the center of campus, the students gathered for their weekly party. A few dozen formed a circle on the dance floor, flailing light sticks around to rave music, while the shyest campers huddled together next door and watched a video of "Big." The movie was nearly over when I walked in, and the hero, played by Tom Hanks, was visiting his old neighborhood. As a boy trapped in a grownup's body, he had proved to be a genius at designing toys and had earned all the perquisites of adult life: a hefty raise, a loft apartment, a beautiful girlfriend. Yet all he could think of was home. He wandered around in his overcoat at sunset, as melancholy strings swelled on the soundtrack, and watched other children play in back yards and baseball fields.

I thought about the math students I'd seen earlier that week, hunched over their textbooks. I knew that some of them were there to pad their college applications and some to please their parents. A few were relishing their first chance to be cool; others were destined to be the nerds of nerd camp. ("They tend to re-create the caste systems of their schools," Camerer says.) Still, their diligence looked anything but feigned or enforced. When I was twelve, and my mother made me practice the violin for half an hour every day, I spent most of the time staring at the clock. These students spent six hours in class and never seemed to glance at their watches. Beneath the blazing concentration in their faces lay a kind of serenity.

This "rage to learn," as one psychologist puts it, is what really distinguishes the gifted from other students. Their minds may be no sharper at birth than anyone else's, but they spend their lives continually, compulsively honing them. "We start with little differences, but they snowball over time," Robert Plomin told me. "Kids who like math get better and better at it, and those who don't, don't. It's more of an appetite than an aptitude." Plomin believes that this appetite (or lack of it) is largely a genetic trait. That's why identical twins, who have the same genes, grow more alike in their intelligence the older they get. In infancy, their I.Q. scores correlate only around twenty per cent. During childhood, the correlation rises to forty per cent, and by adolescence it rises to sixty per cent. By middle age, the scores correlate an astonishing eighty per cent.

Critics say that the twin studies are flawed: the siblings were reared together, so their affinities could be a function of their environments. Yet fraternal twins—who share the same family life—correlate only half as much, and adopted siblings don't correlate at all. "If fifty per cent of our differences in I.Q. are due to genetic factors, that's just off the scale. Nothing else in psychology even begins to explain as much," Plomin says. "But I don't think intelligence itself is hardwired—it's a matter of propensities. It's like B. F. Skinner said: The older I become, the more I become who I am."

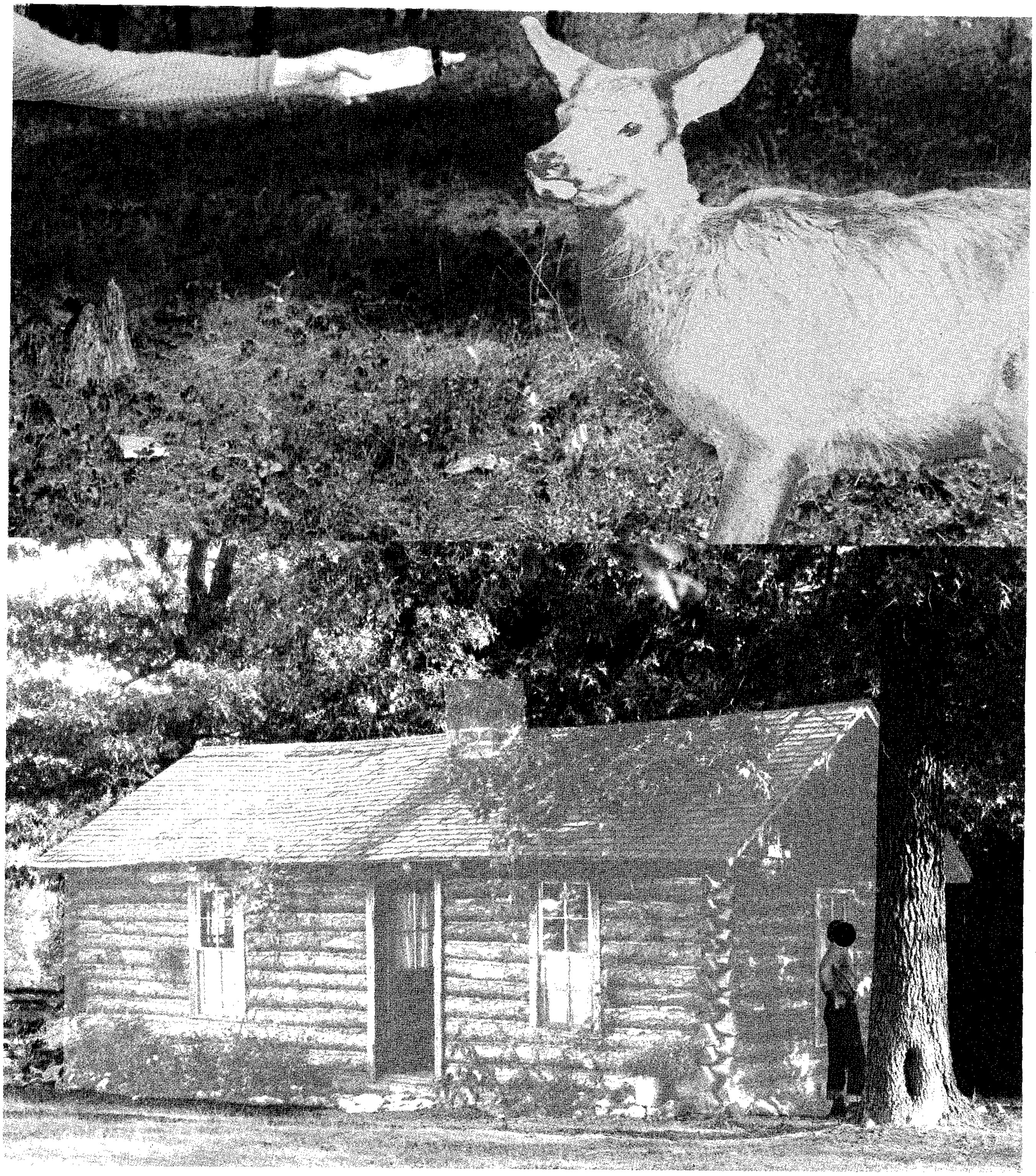
When the lights came up in the movie theatre, I realized that the seats were half empty; most of the campers were much too busy to mourn their lost childhoods. Out in the lobby, Lily Berger was sitting on the carpet, learning some new Mandarin words from a Chinese exchange student. Next door, Tim Hsieh was playing a medieval board game and a piano prodigy was playing Chopin's "Fantaisie-Impromptu" in the corner. At one point, a girl pushed him aside to play "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" with one finger. He waited patiently until she was done, then picked up exactly where he had left off.

The summer sun had been late in setting, but the glass pavilion glowed like a night-light now. When the traditional final number came on—"American Pie"—all the campers gathered on the dance floor. At first, they draped their arms over one another's shoulders and sang along, but at the final word of the opening chorus ("This'll be the day that I die") they suddenly broke rank. Jumping up and down, they shouted in unison, "Die! Die! Die! Die! Live! Live! Live! Live! Sex! Sex! Sex! Sex! More! More! More! More!" I could see Jesse Mirotznik in the middle of the throng, grinning hugely and pogoing around. He had told me that this would happen, and that no one knew exactly how the tradition had started, but it seemed to fit the campers somehow. Mirotznik jumped and flailed and punched his fist in the air: "More! More! More! More!" And then it was time for bed. ♦

FICTION

MAN CRAWLING OUT OF TREES

BY ANNIE PROULX



Mitchell Fair and his wife, Eugenie, sped over the whiskey-colored plains in their aging Infiniti, "cutting prairie," Mitchell said under his breath, thinking it sounded Western. In an hour, they had covered the same ground that would have taken the old oxcart immigrants, trailing a wake of graves, almost a week. It was September, and Mitchell and Eugenie were on their way back to Wyoming after a visit to Maine, where their daughter, Honor, lived with her boyfriend and a new baby boy. The road was wet from a thunderstorm, and in the late-afternoon sun the asphalt gleamed as though drenched with oil. The indigo cloud from which the rain had fallen packed the sky behind them, and on the hood of the car the wind scrolled beads of water into strings of minuscule droplets, like the dotted lines that cartoonists use to indicate trumpet blasts.

It had been a shock to Mitchell, after two years in Wyoming, to see New England again—its maddening choked roads and tangled brush, the trees absorbing light, all drenched in shadow. The tepid air, unmoved by wind, had seemed stifling. The house in which their daughter lived was a log heap built sometime in the nineteen-thirties, a copy of an Adirondack lodge but with decaying sills and warped doors. It perched at the edge of a lake rich with algae, and was the property of their daughter's boyfriend's aunt, who called it a "cottage." The lake gave off a gassy smell. One approached the house on an uneven flagstone walk through uncut grass. The neighboring cottages, which huddled around the shoreline like wet hens, showed garish plastic toys in their yards, and Eugenie guessed these were summer rentals. Inside the house Eugenie sneezed with the regularity of a perpetual-motion machine, plagued by her old allergy to molds.

Honor and her boyfriend, Chaz, called their baby Hal—a mercy, for they had named him Halyard, the namesake, Mitchell said in a disgusted voice, of a rope on a sailboat.

"Why would they do that?" he asked on the first night as they lay in dank twin beds.

Eugenie said nothing, but she knew the importance of giving a baby a distinctive name, whether for a rope, a French novelist, or even an empress.

Chaz was as old as Mitchell, his hair well in retreat and accentuated by a compensatory ponytail. He was vaguely handsome, and evasive with questions on the nature of his income, muttering something about consulting work. He made light conversation about golf with Mitchell, and to Eugenie he chattered about restaurants and wine.

Honor worked three afternoons a week as a dispatcher for Pine Tree Security, a roster of retired urban policemen who patrolled millionaires' second homes on the pond, imitating shivering loon calls as they drove, in practice for an annual contest. The contest had begun in 1987, after the last pair of loons on the lake disappeared. Eugenie tried to worm Chaz's occupational information out of Honor, who turned silent and then said, meanly, "I'll tell you about Chaz when you tell me who my real father is." After that remark, Eugenie went out on the porch to light a cigarette and shoot streams of smoke into the hazy air. She rarely smoked, and had to ask Honor for the cigarette—awkward in the extreme.

At the end of the week, Eugenie told her daughter she should come out to Wyoming for a visit and bring the baby. "We will talk." It was Eugenie's way of making peace. She didn't mention Chaz. Honor smiled a little, touched her mother's hand. But beneath the tranquil moment throbbed their shared knowledge.

The next day, Mitchell and Eugenie started back to Wyoming. At the car, Honor suddenly kissed Mitchell goodbye full on the mouth, an undaughterly kiss from which Mitchell broke away in confusion.

"Now, where did she find him?" he said, wiping at his lips as though to remove the raw flavor of his daughter's mouth as they crept along the narrow road. The sullen sky sagged lower, and it began to rain. This landscape was no longer big enough for him. The long sight lines and rearing mountains of Wyoming had got into his bones.

"Oh, God," Eugenie said. "Poor Honor. Those dark circles. She just doesn't get any rest, taking care of the baby and working, too."

"Like to know what he does. Nothing, I bet. He's got that look. Probably lived off women all his life. She'll dump him, I hope. God, these lousy roads." A front tire thumped into a pothole, and ahead of them, as far as the eye could see, was a wavering parade of more holes gleaming with rainwater. A logging truck passed them, and beneath its weighted wheels Mitchell could almost see the ragged asphalt crumbling. The Infiniti seemed to crawl through the gloom.

"He's the kind of guy you meet in line at the deli," Eugenie said, "and you both say how good the imported olives are." She was glad the visit was over, relieved to be away from her daughter's accusing eye. Honor had held the grudge for more than three years, thanks to bigmouthed Dr. Playfire. It seemed she wasn't going to get over it.

They emerged from New England's lowering trees and overloaded roads, and, several days later, reached the end of endless Nebraska and crossed the Wyoming border. Mitchell, who had been irritable the whole trip, brightened despite the scruffy dandruff of billboards and signs that marred the approach to Cheyenne. A quarter of a mile to their right, a cattle train labored. Eugenie punched the CD player back to her favorite track, Jimmy Dale Gilmore singing nasally about Dallas and a DC-9. Mitchell, who preferred classical music, tried to remember what a DC-9 had looked like, but could come up with only a hazy recollection of a short, fat plane with propellers, of scratchy seats and a dismal bus-station smell. He doubted that there was still a DC-9 in operation anywhere on the continent. Well, maybe in Canada. And Jimmy Dale Gilmore, or whoever had written the song, must now be embarrassed that he had ever been awed by either a DC-9 or Dallas.

The train tracks veered south, and the train swung away from the highway, taking the cows to slaughterhouses. Eugenie and Mitchell could see the dark bodies through the perforated metal sides of the cars. Eugenie waved at the disappearing train. Mitchell glanced at her. As she had aged, her classic profile had thickened, the delicate cheeks had become slabs of rouged flesh, the chin had lost its clean line, and her nose had coarsened. At the sides of her mouth were tiny curved lines like the bends in fishhooks. But the black

MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

"Log Cabin, Deer, and Two Figures (One with Baby Bottle)," 2004, by John Baldessari.

hair was the same, a few tendrils curling in front of her ears like inked drawings of a scrolled fiddle neck, and to strangers she presented the dramatic look of a woman with a story.

A semi, the tyrannosaurus of the interstate, passed them, swaying. "Doing ninety at least," he said. "I'm right on seventy-five." Mitchell hated semis, and usually Eugenie made a noise in her throat to indicate that she, too, disliked the big trucks, a pretense that arose from the deeper pretense of wifely subordination to a husband's opinions. This time she didn't answer, thumbing through the CDs in the zippered carrying case. There was nothing she wanted to hear, hadn't heard over and over on the way East. They should have bought some books on tape. At least she hadn't had to listen to Mitchell's lugubrious quartets and motets and symphonies. Before they left Wyoming, she had caught him going through his precious CD collection. "Don't bring that stuff," she had said flatly. Now she switched the console to radio and caught "Car Talk." Both brothers were laughing hysterically, and a third laugher was adding to the din. Mitchell pointed at a multicolored herd of horses beyond a fence.

"How did it go again? Come on, *Bawb*, make the sound your car made . . ."

An incredible series of wheezes, gurgles, snorts, and panting sounds issued from the radio. Eugenie laughed along with the whooping brothers.

"Shut it off, will you?"

"I thought you liked 'Car Talk.' It's about cars."

"I know it's 'about cars.' Maybe ten per cent of it. The rest is hyena-howling and asking women how they spell their names."

In the silence that followed, Mitchell became aware of a faint wheezing sound from the Infiniti. As he listened, he heard other abnormal sounds. Everything suddenly began to rattle and shimmy. In the back seat, the box containing truffled walnut oil, jars of French cornichons, juniper berries, tins of Eugenie's favorite macaroons from Saint-Jean-de-Luz, and a few bottles of Graham's 2000 vintage port, all things they could not find in Wyoming, clinked and knocked. He stretched out his arm and turned the radio back on.

"How do you spell that, T-H-E-R-E-S-A or T-E-R-E-S . . ." Eugenie turned the radio off.

"What did you do that for?"

"I didn't want to hear them doing the name-spelling thing, either."

The Infiniti was running smoothly again, and he remembered that there was a rough patch somewhere along this stretch of highway—that must have been it.

A few miles beyond blustery Elk Mountain, Mitchell said, "Look at that."

"What?"

"The smoke that damn semi's making." He pointed his chin in the direction of the eastbound lane, and she saw it a mile ahead: one of thousands of eighteen-wheeled trucks on the road, differing only in the billows of diesel smoke pouring from it. But, as they drew abreast, enormous orange flames shot into the air. The truck pulled over on the shoulder, and they could see that a tarpaulin rolled up behind the cab was on fire. The driver jumped out and ran in front of his truck, shouting into a cell phone.

"Hah!" Mitchell said with something like satisfaction. "It'll be an hour before anybody gets here."

In midafternoon, Mitchell turned north. It was five o'clock when they hit the familiar dirt road after the "Fireworks" sign. They crossed the tracks, and the terrain began to rise, a little rumpled and showing bits of dark-red ledge beyond the fences. A dozen pronghorn grazed a mile away, and he slowed, watching the guard-duty animal throw up its head suspiciously. As they drove, a billow of dust rose behind them. It was a hopeless chore, trying to keep the car clean. A small stream, known locally as a river, the banks faced with flattened junk cars to prevent erosion in the spring floods, threaded down from the rough foothills. They could see the dark ridge, the aspen grove that marked Star Lily Ranch in the distance, even the top of the Swift Fox water tower. A mile beyond the cattle guard, they crossed the railroad tracks again, the Infiniti thumping painfully. At the fork, he bore right, and the road climbed, took its most beautiful turn through the heart of dappling aspen, then opened out into a series of folded meadows.

Their house was in one of the meadows, sheltered to the southeast by a broad band of aspen, which someone had told him were mysteriously dying. When he mentioned this to Eugenie, she had said, "Oh, no," for she had a reverence for trees—the sycamore tree in Brooklyn, the beech and maple of Vermont, and here, where trees were lacking, she immediately elevated the aspen to high rank, despite its resemblance to the poplar, weed tree of the northeast. In another time, Mitchell joked, she would have been the priestess of a sacred grove.

In the aspen grove, shortly after they moved in, he had come upon the old wrought-iron sign that once crowned the entrance to the ranch from which their lot had been sliced. It read simply "Panama." The original owner of the place had worked in his youth on the Isthmus of Panama as an express-shipment clerk for Wells Fargo. The metal arch lay face down in the dirt. Mitchell had dug it up, cleaned the leaf mold from it with a stick, and leaned it against an aspen. It was too heavy to carry. He would come one day with the truck and get it.

A mile farther on and they could see the dark mass of lodgepole pine and Engelmann spruce that curved around their meadow like an encircling arm. The chimney was just visible, and Eugenie knew that the first thing Mitchell would do was light a fire, pour a drink, and sit in front of the fireplace, mesmerizing himself with the twisting flames while she defrosted two steaks. They were both on the diet that called for red meat and salad.

At the bottom of the hill, they saw that there had been a change in Swift Fox while they were gone.

"Look," Eugenie said. "It's the old woman. She's not dead and she's got a new house."

Mrs. Conkle's scabrous trailer was gone. In its place was a small log cabin. The old woman was outside, smacking a stick at a sagebrush. She seemed made from sagebrush and rock herself.

Mitchell had met Eugenie Prower in the mid-seventies, at Bennington College, in Vermont, and they had married in a round barn. The farmer who owned the barn had asked—and received—a thousand dollars in rental. Eugenie had then had the face of Pallas Athena, with a straight nose, a small chiselled mouth, and black hair pulled into a low knot at the nape of her neck. She was big-boned, with a full bosom and comfortable hips. There had been no indication that she would slowly change into a full-jawed Queen of Diamonds, decked in ornate chokers and turtleneck Peruvian sweaters. Back in those early days, she had told him she loved classical music, and only gradually did he realize that she had meant some syrupy string ensemble that played popular medleys. It hadn't mattered, because he'd thought she would learn to like the real music.

At the end of their barn wedding ceremony, Mitchell had had a sudden and awful vision of his new wife, naked and down on all fours, looking beseechingly at the farmer, who was coming at her with a milking machine. As if Eugenie had read Mitchell's thought, she fired a hard glance that struck him like a hurled shot glass. For her part, Eugenie had seen him at that moment as a weird stranger, his narrow head and smooth Nordic features startlingly similar to a photograph she had once seen of a preserved corpse pulled from a Scandinavian bog. There had been a braided leather rope around the ancient neck, the man choked in ritual death. She wanted to shout "No!" But in a few minutes they were running through the rice gantlet, on their way to married life with no thoughts of milking machines or leathery bog men.

Through the years, they had been tolerably content with each other, perhaps because early on they had bought an old farmhouse in Vermont that served as a cooling-off retreat for one or the other when they quarrelled. Mitchell was an architect with Dyer, Foxcap & Waigwa, in Manhattan, and Eugenie was one of several designers at her family's kitchen-and-bath business, Prower & Baggs. Her mother had started the business in the fifties, designing country kitchens with gingham curtains, geraniums, and sunny breakfast nooks that were styled after some mythical Buck's County farmhouse. Now everything was sleek, gray, and German.

Their house in Brooklyn Heights was a brownstone whose best feature was a sycamore at the back that filled the summer yard with luxurious rustling shade. In the winter, Eugenie, who took a class at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in ways to attract birds, hung out feeders and kept a journal on the avian fauna that came to them. These were the years before the snake entered the garden.

Then Mitchell had an affair with an architectural intern. Eugenie did not confront him but waited it out, her emotions and thoughts a purée of humiliation and anger. When it was finished, she had a vengeful affair of her own, with a handsome assistant cabinet liaison named Taylor. He was six years younger than she, and the role of an experienced older woman initiating an innocent into the pleasures of love gratified her ego. They took long, long lunch hours, extending into late afternoon, at "their" hotel, where Eugenie paid. But her affection for Taylor curdled overnight when, following a Presidents' Day weekend, he told her that he did not want to go on with the stolen meetings. He had gone to Mt. Tremblant with friends and, as he put it, had met someone for whom he "cared very deeply."

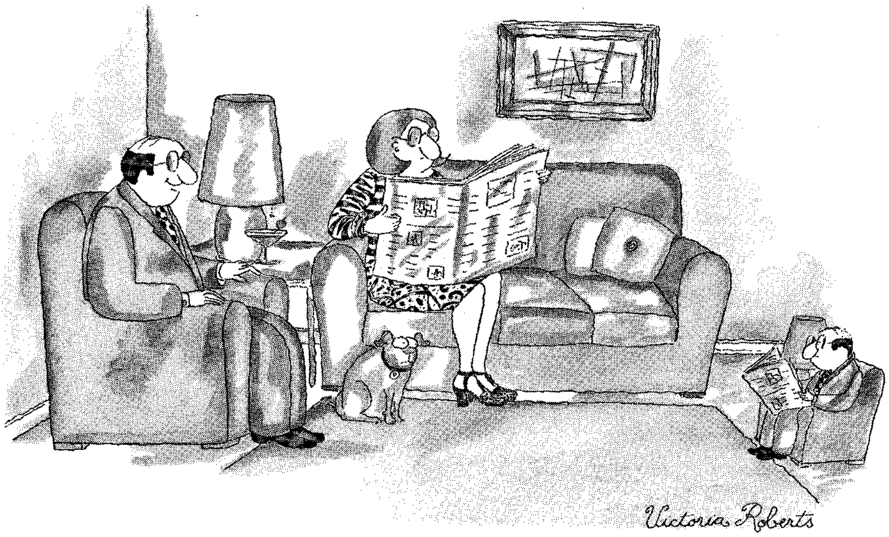
"What, in forty-eight hours you developed this deep emotion?"

"Yes," he said stubbornly, his face flaming.

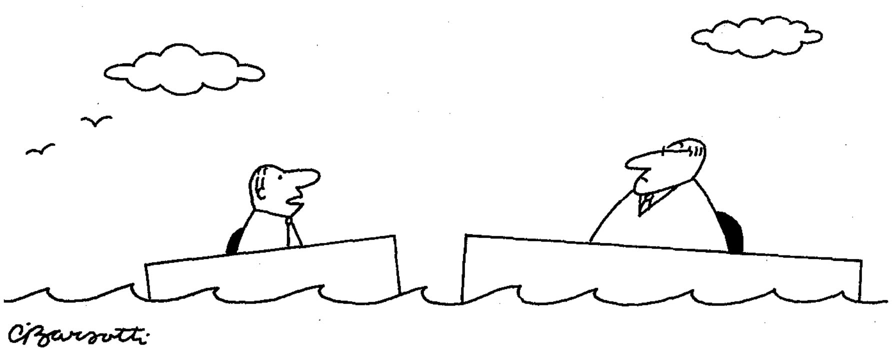
"Fine," she said. "Fine." But back at the office she had remarked privily to key people that she did not think Taylor was cut out for the kitchen-and-bath business, that he had poor design sense, that his three-hour lunches were likely meetings with Downtown Kitchens, to whom he was spilling his guts about the new suède-covered cabinets, that he was plotting to go over to D.T.K., and God knew what clients he would try to take with him. But already it was too late; already the moment had arrived, as when the woodsman's arms reach the apogee of the swing and the axe begins its irrevocable descent, the moment at which, for the tree, everything changes. Eugenie was pregnant.

They named the baby Honor because Eugenie had been moved by Honoré de Balzac's "Le Père Goriot" in French class. Mitchell believed that their daughter had been conceived in their five-legged bed, the supernumerary leg a wizened center-positioned stick with a metal glide foot. It was meant to give extra support but failed and beat counterpoint against the floor when they made love. Worse than the rapping leg was Eugenie's assortment of plans, blueprints, and new design books. She studied them for hours while Mitchell flopped and sighed ostentatiously, yanking pillows and covers over his head. In the morning, they would both wake with the marks of books and bound plans on them. And the blueprints were often damaged, creased, and torn.

One morning, a few months after the baby was born, Mitchell fell asleep on the subway, transported back and forth for hours until groping fingers inside his jacket woke him. This happened, he said, because Eugenie's lamp and the crackling papers had kept him awake all night. That evening, he made up a bed on the sofa, and the next morning he said he had not had such a good sleep in years. Eugenie, too, had enjoyed the extra space, shoved sketches and eleva-



"I think the lodger's settling in."



"I thought you were the one who *sent* *jobs overseas."*

tions onto Mitchell's side of the bed. It was a relief not to hear him mumbling in his sleep as he rowed through his gluey ocean of dreams.

Mitchell slept on the sofa for weeks, until Eugenie noticed that the living room had absorbed his stale odor. That Saturday, they had flipped a coin for the spare room, more of a storage place than a guest room, and it had come up tails. Mitchell took their old bedroom and bought a new CD player for himself. Eugenie got the spare room, cleared out the boxes and plastic storage bins of winter clothes, repainted the walls a melon color, and spent a small fortune on dark-blue tailored drapes that gave the space a slightly masculine flavor. There was a niche where she put the baby's cot. She put a luggage rack at the foot of the bed and on it a gilded Italian lacquer tray. In two days, the tray was stacked with notebooks of ideas for dream kitchens glittering with copper in which no one would ever cook.

Eugenie and Honor were sitting together on a red leather sofa when Dr. Playfire said that Honor could not be a kidney donor for Mitchell because neither her DNA nor her blood type matched. Eugenie felt the blood rise to her face, and her heart thrummed with hatred for the pink-chopped doctor whose eyes were bright with malice and who obviously relished the news he was breaking. She said nothing.

In the elevator Honor burst out, "My God! Who is my father?"

"Someone else, obviously," Eugenie said.

"But who? What happened? Were you married to someone else?"

"I don't intend to discuss it," Eugenie said in a glacier voice.

The elevator stopped, and a man in a wheelchair pushed by a young woman got on. They rode in vibrating silence to the ground floor, Honor clenching her fists and glaring at her mother. In the car, Eugenie held her silence while Honor wept, shouted, and demanded until she was hoarse and choking. Neither of them told Mitchell what Dr. Playfire had said—that Mitchell was not Honor's biological father—and Mitchell's youngest sister, Paula, became his kidney donor instead.

Honor left home while Mitchell was still in the hospital. New York changed, and Eugenie was afraid and talked with Mitchell about getting out of the city. By then, they had sold the farmhouse in Vermont. Mitchell, who had been thinking about Montana during his recuperation, read an article in *Personal Finance* that named Wyoming as a state with low property taxes and no income tax at all. It seemed a safe haven as well—an unlikely target, as the state's entire population could fit into a phone booth. He recalled a childhood summer camp in the Tetons, singing around a campfire, fishing on Jenny Lake, and exploring Yellowstone trails on horseback.

Gradually, Eugenie and Mitchell began to think that Wyoming might be both an adventure and a sensible move. Mitchell, recovered from his kidney transplant, asked for semi-retirement—he would fly from Wyoming to New York every two months and stay a few days. Eugenie said that she could finally start on the two books she wanted to write, "The Real Urban Kitchen—Takeout & Deli" and "Global Kitchen."

They made a trip out to scout around. Mitchell was stunned by the beauty of the place—not the over-photographed jags of the Grand Tetons but the high prairie and the luminous yellow distance, which pleased his sense of spatial arrangement. He felt as though he had been transported to the ur-landscape before human beginnings. The mountains crouched at every horizon like dark sleeping animals, their backs whitened by snow. He trod on wildflowers and glistening quartz crystals, on agate, and jade, and brilliant lichens. The unfamiliar grasses vibrated, their incandescent stalks lighting the huge ground. Distance reduced a herd of cattle to a handful of tossed cloves. His heart squeezed in and he wished for a celestial eraser to remove the fences, the crude houses, his own future home included, from this place. Even the sinewy, braided currents of the wind, which were making Eugenie irritable, pleased him.

Before they looked for a house, they outfitted themselves at a Western-wear store, Eugenie buying two fringed suède skirts, some high-necked Cattle Kate blouses, and a pair of Rocketbuster boots featuring turquoise skeletons. Mitchell got into jeans, a Western-cut shirt with pearl buttons. He bought a pair of butter-colored Olathe boots that slammed like a trip hammer wherever he walked. He stumbled a lot, unable to get used to high heels, especially as he'd just got his first pair of bifocals. He bought a twenty-year-old pickup with four-wheel drive, dark green and dented—something he had always wanted—had a CD player installed, and took to driving around with his elbow out the window. He marvelled at the truck's lack of rust.

"No salt on the roads here," he crowed.

Eugenie gave him a look as though he'd said he preferred his morning egg raw.

They stayed in Jackson while they looked for a house. Eugenie wanted to be near the Tetons, Yellowstone Park, and the national forests, but the cheapest places cost millions. Wyoming's easy taxes were almost negated by the extraordinarily high prices for property; scruffy sagebrush with bad water nine hundred feet down was priced at breathtaking amounts if there was a mountain range in view. Mitchell began to think of these properties as widows' windfalls.

He imagined poor old ranchers working themselves into early graves holding on to their places. And when they died the widows dumped the cows and called up the real-estate brokers who sketched out thirty-five-acre ranchettes. The widows then hightailed it to condos in Boca Raton—with the exception of Eleanora Figg.

The Fairs bought one of these ex-pasture plots thirty miles from Pinedale in a gated cluster of "estates" named Star Lily Ranch. They were three miles from the tiny town of Swift Fox, population 73, fitted out with a general store and the Sagebrush Café. At dusk, a globe of light like a red jellyfish formed above Swift Fox and stained the mountainy darkness the weak orange of civilization.

The house stood on a sunny slope of wildflowers and silver sage with a view of the Bachelor range, which, even in summer, resembled a monstrous slab of halvah veined with mauve chocolate. In the distance, the Wind Rivers lay against the horizon like crumpled envelopes.

The house, like every other house in Star Lily Ranch, was constructed of enormous pine logs. It was not the timber castle of some of their neighbors, but still, with forty-two hundred square feet, the largest house of their lives. The interior, designed in the grand rancho style of the nineteen-eighties, featured a gargantuan living room, intricate log notches, the distant mountains fitted artfully into the vast window against which birds broke their necks.

Eugenie pronounced the kitchen a mess of cracked tile and greasy walls. She hated the elderly refrigerator's menacing snarl. Brown nylon carpet covered the living room and the bedroom floors, the history of the former occupants written in its stains and chair-leg dents. The five bedrooms were tiny and dark. Eugenie set to work remaking the place with a loan from her mother.

"We'll take out these walls," she said, gesturing at the narrow dining room, the kitchen, the oversized living room. "We'll make a 'great room,' so the space flows from the kitchen end to the dining space to the relaxation area."

"This one and that one are load-bearing walls," Mitchell said, squinting at the ceiling. "You can't take those out."

"We'll see. I'll get a builder in next week and go over the whole place with him. And those grim little bedrooms. If we knock out a couple of walls, we'll have two good-sized rooms. And put in some decent bay windows. There should be a terrific view of the mountains from the bedrooms."

The real-estate agent, deeply tanned and wearing an expensive hat with a buckaroo telescope crease, had suggested that one of the bedrooms would make a nice home theatre. Eugenie noticed that his tan had an orange cast, and beneath his strong cologne she detected the charred smell of chemical tanning lotion.

"You know," he said, "you're the first people from New York I ever sold a house to. We don't get New Yorkers here. Not their kind a place, I guess."

"My God," Mitchell said sotto voce to Eugenie, "all of this to look at"—he gestured at the tawny landscape, the distant mountains—"and he says 'home theatre'?"

They both marvelled at the astonishing wildlife, but for Eugenie the animals and birds were a decorative novelty. Mitchell, on the other hand, fell deeply in love with pronghorns, those supreme athletes of the animal world which, along with wolves and bison, had evolved on the high plains over the course of twenty million years. He called them "antelope." Their coloration—a reddish brown accented by sparkling white—reminded him of a pair of golf shoes he had once owned.

Eugenie found Mitchell in the attic one day rummaging through the boxes they had never unpacked—city clothes, old financial records that might be needed someday, a miscellany of odds and ends.

"What are you looking for?"

"My old golf shoes," he said, straightening up under the purlins.

"Golf shoes! Mitchell, you told me to get rid of all your golf stuff back when you had the transplant."

"Yes," he said, "but I thought the shoes might have made it."

"Well, they didn't. Why do you want them, anyway? I can't believe you are thinking of taking up golf again."

"No." He couldn't say that it was because he had wanted to see how closely the golf shoes resembled pronghorn. That first winter, he mourned when he read in the local paper that in a snowstorm a semi had plowed into a small herd of pronghorn on I-80 and killed seventeen animals. He despised semis more than ever.

Wyoming had seemed civilized when they first moved out, but gradually evidence appeared that forced them to recognize that they were in a place that people in the East would regard as peripheral to the real world. There were disturbing proofs that the weight of a harsh past still bore down with force. Every few months, something inexplicably rural happened: on a back road, one man shot another with his great-grandfather's .45-70 vintage buffalo gun; a newcomer from Iowa set out for an afternoon hike and fell off a cliff as she descended Wringer Mountain. Black bears came down in September and smashed Eugenie's bird feeders. A hawk hid under the potentilla bush and leaped suddenly on an overconfident prairie dog a little too far from its burrow. In Antler Spring, the town where they bought their liquor and groceries, forty-two miles beyond Swift Fox, a young woman expecting her first child was widowed when her husband, fighting summer wildfires in Colorado, was killed by a Pulaski tool that fell from a helicopter. Vacationers locked themselves out of their cars and were struck by lightning. Ranchers, their eyes on their cattle, drove off the road and overturned. Everything seemed to end in blood.

Outside the Star Lily Ranch community, Eleanora Figg was their nearest neighbor. She was a widow rancher in her mid-seventies, of the classic Republican, conservative, art-hating, right-wing, outspoken, flint-faced type. She ran cattle and some sheep, drove an ancient black jeep. She loathed environmentalists and people from somewhere else. Mitchell understood the bumper sticker on her jeep—"Shoot, Shovel and Shut Up"—to express her opinion on wolves. She had taken one look at the Fairs' Infiniti and known them for sybarites who dined on camel's heels and foreign olives. She herself lived on home-killed beef, boiled potatoes, and black coffee. She was always dressed in jeans, manure-caked boots, and a ragged barn coat. When they first met, Mitchell shook the old woman's hand, feeling the coarse, hard fingers grip-ping his own with remarkable strength.

"How's your teeth?" she said. "Pretty sharp?"

"I don't know," Mitchell said, nonplussed by the odd question. "Why?"

"Always lookin for somebody help us castrate lambs."

At the post office, the woman told him about Eleanora Figg.

"Her and her boys Condor and Tommy just about run this place." She added that there had been a third son, Cody, who had died of heatstroke while hiking in the Grand Canyon on his first and only vacation.

Mitchell had met Condor Figg. The first winter, he learned the hard way that the truck he had bought was best as a summer truck. It skidded and slewed in the lightest snow. The inevitable happened, and while he was trying to call a tow truck on his cell phone, cursing the hundreds of Wyoming dead spots that made smoke signals more practical than cell phones, a flatbed truck carrying a thousand-pound roll of hay pulled up.

"Got a chain?" the driver yelled, a big chunky man wearing a T-shirt despite the cold and snow. He had a curly black beard and eyes as narrow and darting as two fingerling trout.

"No," Mitchell said, and before his mouth closed the man was dragging a heavy chain with hook ends from his truck. In less than forty seconds, he had the chain wrapped around Mitchell's trailer hitch and the truck up on the road, pointed the wrong way.

"My God," Mitchell said, "how can I thank you?" He fumbled for money, looking at the hole in the snow where the truck had been. Beyond the fence, thirty or forty pronghorn grazed with cool detachment. He rushed on, his voice fast out of his throat. "My name's Mitchell Fair. We live in Star Lily Ranch." And he held out a twenty-dollar bill.

The man looked at him with hatred. "Yeah. I know. Keep your money. Where your house sets is where my folks had a stock tank. When old Dean Peraine had that truck you bought off a him, he run it ever weather for damn near ten years. Had some weight to her. Never went off the road unless he wanted to." He jumped in the big truck, stood on the gas, and was gone in a blast of blue smoke.

Mitchell put four hundred pounds of sandbags in the bed of his truck and his winter-driving skills improved. He stayed on the road.

There was another old woman in Swift Fox—Mrs. Conkle. She was also a rancher's widow but lived in the decrepit trailer with a yellow stucco exterior. Over the years, wind-driven dirt had discolored the structure as the stucco cracked and buckled into a leprous mass. Sometimes when the Fairs drove past they saw the old woman outside, struggling to hang some wet gray garments on a drooping clothesline.

"That old thing," Eugenie said. "You have to wonder how somebody gets to that state."

The day the Fairs left Swift Fox on their journey to Maine they had passed Mrs. Conkle's ugly trailer. The yard was full of trucks, and men were coming from the trailer carrying a bureau, a box of canning jars, a rocking chair.

"Ah," Eugenie said. "There must have been a fire. Or maybe the poor old lady died and the relatives are going through her things."

Mitchell didn't think so. As they neared the bottom of the hill, coming toward them was Condor Figg's flatbed, loaded with lumber and logs. In the side mirror, Mitchell saw him turn in to Mrs. Conkle's yard.

Mitchell was glad to be back in Wyoming, far from Maine, and in a way Eugenie was not displeased, though the place seemed as alien as ever. The air was clear and the sunlight so intense that the subtle colors of lichen and rock, of dusty sage leaf, burned with an intensity the clouded East could never know. A few days after their return, the first storm flailed a few yellow leaves from the aspen and beat down the summer grasses. Weeds collapsed under the hard frost that followed. Then came ten days of flawless clarity, radiantly golden days in the shimmering aspen groves. Ribbons of resinous scent twisted from the lodgepole pine on the slopes above.

"It is beautiful," Eugenie agreed. Several times, she walked out on the forest trail near the house where the odor was of dry duff, of earth scratched about by bears raiding squirrel hoards. Her walks stopped abruptly one day when she met a hunter. He looked wretched and tough, bowlegged, his face smeared with blacking, a trickle of blood in front

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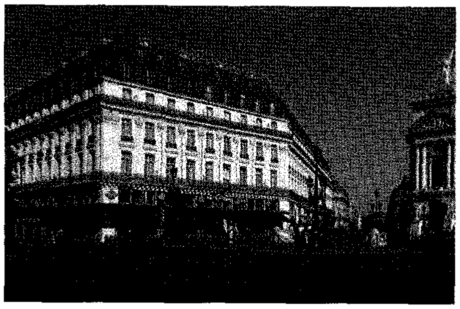

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of his ear where a branch had pierced the skin. He carried a powerful-looking bow, and the razor points of his arrows glittered. He glared at her with wolfish eyes. She could smell a sharp odor.

"You ought a be wearin orange. Get yourself shot in that getup."

She was wearing her brown suède jacket and suddenly realized that from a distance, to someone peering through the trees, she might briefly resemble a deer. Perhaps this man had even trained an arrow on her. She could not speak. She turned and began walking rapidly toward the trailhead. At a bend in the trail, she turned around and was frightened to see him following. She ran then for the parking lot, expecting to feel an arrow in her back or a hand clamped over her mouth. She said nothing to Mitchell, because he had already remarked several times that it was hunting season and they ought to get orange vests.

In late October, the first snowstorms arrived and steady cold began building the drifts. A few deer came to Eugenie's bird feeders and she put out pie pans of sunflower seeds for them. In less than a week, there was a herd of fifty mule deer in their yard at dusk, and Eugenie thought of the bow hunter and was glad that the deer were safe from him. The wind blew the pie pans away, and she got Mitchell to pour the contents of the twenty-pound bags directly on the ground near a clump of rabbitbrush. The deer ate all of the seed each night, and soon the Fairs were spending seventy dollars a week on sunflower seeds. Foxes also came for the seed, and magpies, Steller's jays, even a northern flicker, which seemed the wrong kind of bird to patronize a feeder. Mitchell said he should buy a rifle, as one deer would be a good return on their birdseed investment.

"God," Eugenie said disgustedly.

"You will never see anything like this back East," she wrote to Honor. "Fantastic wildlife, although Mitchell now wants to start killing it." She was careful not to write "your father." Honor, who never wrote letters, telephoned and said that she had moved out of the cottage and into an apartment in Brooklyn, that Hal was cutting teeth and was awful with crying and fussing, that he was at day care because Honor had found a wonderful job with a group that made socially responsible documentary films.

"Still, it's not easy," she said.

"Do you need some money?" asked Eugenie. She was so glad to talk to Honor she nearly cried. Until that moment, she had not realized how miserable she was in Wyoming with only Mitchell. She knew that people talked about them. When she went into the Swift Fox store for eggs, silence fell. If she remarked that it was a beautiful day, there was a pause, then some hearty voice said it sure was and the silence came again. As she shut the door behind her, she could hear the sudden babble of voices inside. The woman at the post office, herself an outsider, said, "Oh, they'll accept you up to the fence, but they'll never let you open the gate."

"Money?" Honor said. "Well, I could use it. Rent day seems to come around pretty fast. The job doesn't pay much, but there's a good chance that it will if I can stick with it." Her voice sounded cheery and confident, and Eugenie suddenly missed her old job and smart, good New York talk; she missed noon-hour shopping and being able to find anything she needed or wanted, missed the restaurants and the museums. Honor didn't mention Chaz, and Eugenie didn't ask. She assumed that Chaz was out of the picture. She sent a check and asked Honor to send her a supply of her special hand cream, which she could not find in Wyoming.

Mitchell had learned that Star Lily Ranch encroached on an ancient elk, deer, and pronghorn migration corridor, and that the animals now had to thread their way through a maze of towns, ranches, fences, and roads to reach their traditional summer-grazing range, in the Bachelors. The effect of the big log houses, each with its yapping dogs, was as pernicious as that of any trashy trailer park. A sense of guilt began to dye his time in the house. He could almost understand Condor Figg's hatred of these houses choking the passage and the old landscape, although the Figgs themselves had sold the land, and their livestock fences blocked everything but the wind.

December was wretchedly cold, made worse by violent winds. When Eugenie went outside, spicules of snow stung her face and rattled against her windproof jacket. The roads were treacherous, and day after day she was trapped in the house. Somehow Mitchell continued his drives in the bad weather, relishing

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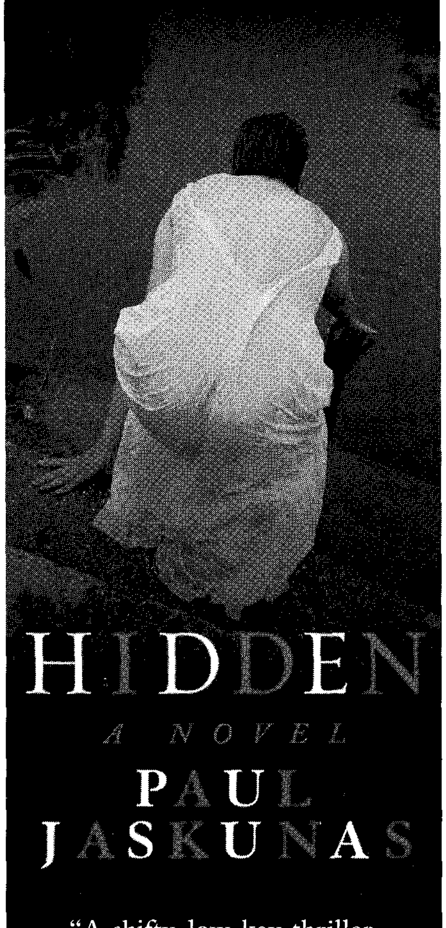

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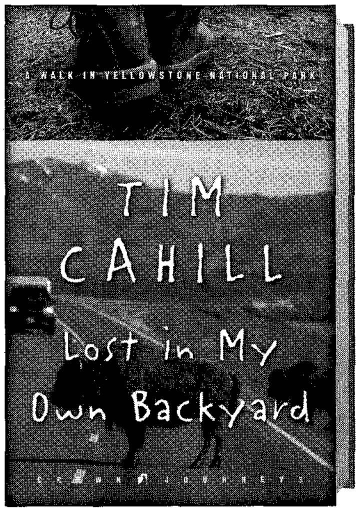

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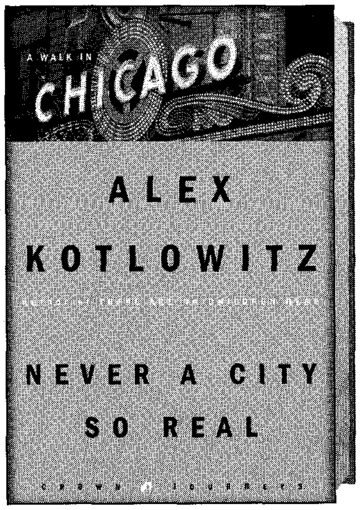

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the difficulties. The snow stopped, but the wind exhausted her. Dry and bitterly cold, it built the snow into small private dunes on the lee side of each sage plant, polished the remaining snow into tight, glossy sculptures. The few clouds drew out as fine and long as needle threads, and the wind-damaged sky showed the same chill blue as a gas flame. The wind set its teeth into the heavy log house and shook it with terrific gusts. In the early mornings, it ceased for a few hours, then, as the sun climbed over the aspen, it returned, brutal and avid, sweeping into the air what little loose snow remained. Steadily, conditions shifted into the worst winter they had yet experienced.

One afternoon, she sat at the English elm table reading a new book—"Tropical Motifs in Contemporary Bath Design"—which featured ferns and orchids cascading down the walls. Mitchell was out of the house on one of his interminable drives. She noticed a flicker of movement on the slope where the Engelmann spruce grew which did not seem to be wind-driven. There it was again, something moving in the snow. She got the bird binoculars and looked. A man was crawling through the trees.

He wallowed in the snow, thrusting ever closer. She watched him from her desk, her heart beating hard and fast. She thought of the hunter she had seen in the autumn. When the man came within fifty feet of the house, she expected to see him get up and come crouching forward, a knife or a bow and arrow in his hands. But he threw back his head and made a ferocious face. Perhaps he even howled. His face was intensely red, and even from a distance she could see the sheen of moisture on it despite the snow and cold. He looked like a maniac. She called the sheriff's department in Antler Spring and reported a prowler, then waited, anxious and frightened. She tried to call Mitchell on his cell phone but there was no answer. Nearly an hour went by and still no one came. She peeped out every few minutes to see if the man was still there. He was wriggling through the snow like a caterpillar, crawling toward the front of the house. When he turned the corner, she could no longer see him without going outside. She thought she could hear him grunting and repeating some words. A crazy man. A horror of the situation built up in her.

Finally, she saw the sheriff's patrol car cresting the long hill, and behind the car a familiar black jeep. Both vehicles pulled into the drive. She stood at the kitchen window. She could no longer see the crawling man but she imagined she heard him hunching toward the door.

The driver of the sheriff's car, a uniformed fat woman with red hair, waited for the jeep to pull up. Eleanora Figg jumped out of it spryly. Both women went to the far side of the porch, and she heard their voices.

"Upsy-daisy," someone said. The two of them shoulder-carried the man to the sheriff's car and helped him into it. Eleanora Figg leaned through the window and talked to him. The red-haired woman came to Eugenie's door.

"Skier. Busted his leg up there." She pointed to the steep slopes behind the aspen. "He was hurt," she said accusingly. "Crawled all the way here lookin for help. He could see you peekin out the window, but you never open the door."

"I didn't know what he was up to," Eugenie said defensively. "He could have been—anyone. He could have been a murderer or an escaped criminal. I didn't know he was hurt."

"Well, you seen him layin there. He wasn't doin nothin bad, was he?"

"It could have been a trick," Eugenie said. The big woman said nothing, strode to her vehicle, touched Eleanora Figg on the shoulder, said something. They drove away.

Eugenie said nothing about any of this to Mitchell when he came in at dusk.

Almost from the beginning, Mitchell had taken to driving deep distances through the state. He had never known such driving pleasure, clear roads empty of traffic, and on all sides the vast basin-and-range landscapes. He drove along greasy back roads, through red canyons trickling dirt from slides, over prairie cresting in slow waves. He climbed mountains with passes open only four months of the year. He moved steadily over black ice and through whiteouts feeling the truck shake with the punching wind. Once or twice, he was stranded on dirt roads made as slippery as lard by rain swelling the bentonite in the soil. There was nothing to do but sit and wait until the road dried out enough for the tires to grip. And through all his driving he played the classical CDs that Eugenie disliked so much, feeling the landscape through the music.

He had discovered the ideal music for these drives by accident. He and Eugenie had argued about something (an hour later, he had no idea what had so irritated them). He had hastily snatched up a handful of CDs and rushed out to the truck. It was bad for both of them to be trapped in the house together all day. It had been better in New York, when they had come together at the end of the day, tired of other people, finding solace in each other's company. They had enjoyed a drink and offered the brighter scraps of office gossip. Sometimes they had gone out to dinner, more often they'd ordered hot dishes in from Casserole Chef. Now there was no office gossip, and he couldn't proffer his descriptions of rock mass and trembling snow. They were more and more two cranky people under each other's feet. He suspected that Eugenie wanted to go back to New York and he half hoped she would go. Why couldn't she say it? It was impossible for him to bring up the subject. He had had enough of something, but not the place. He would stay, no matter what happened.

In this mood, one day, driving through the empty reaches west and north of Muddy Gap, he began to think about dinosaurs. They had been here in the ancient steamy swamps tearing foliage from tropical trees, kicking huge wounds in each other's bellies with claws like scimitars. Their fossilized bones and stony footprints were everywhere. In the midst of these thoughts, he slipped a CD into the player without looking at it. Let it be a surprise.

A fine net of clustered organ notes sounded, mournful and slow. He did not know the music and turned up the volume to overcome the engine's hum. Without warning, a gigantic bass huffing and snorting smote him. The loudness stunned him, seemed to blow a hole in his chest. The sound seemed so intensely dinosaurlike that he almost screamed. The frail wandering notes returned, and then the ghastly roars again. What in the name of God was he listening to? In his mind, this music, the dinosaurs, the roaring organ all merged. With shuddering flesh and an electric current coursing up his spine, he could hardly bear it, the perfect fit of this music to the tawny ground, the abrupt buttes, the distant fan of peaks, the monstrous scale of geologic time. He pulled over and ejected the disk: John Cage's "Souvenir." He had listened to the piece before, but always at a low volume that sheathed the claws.

At home again, he tore through his CD collection looking for organ music. There wasn't much—Arvo Pärt's "Annum per Annum," the Trivium pieces, and a few others. He played these on his next drive and found that the Issey Miyake accordion pleats of the Ferris mountains fit Pärt's "Mein Weg hat Gipfel und Welletäler," with its questing sonic waves. He experienced the most intense pleasure in being alone, in swallowing the landscape in great chunks, drowning in the heavy surf of sound, the transmutation of geology into music.

Another time, while driving, he noticed a filthy yellow haze lying over the Wind River range. He stopped for gas at a tiny convenience store in the sage and asked the old man behind the counter what it was—dust, maybe?

The old man, his face so warted and freckled it seemed made of gravel conglomerate, rolled his eyes.

"Pollution. It's smog. Comes from that goddam Jonah infill methane-gas project. One well every ten acres. Never seen that smog before in Wyomin. You're seein her start to die. The whoremasters got ahold a her. They got her down on her knees and any tinhorn with five bucks in his jeans comes by they put the prod pole to her and say 'Suck his dick.' "

Mitchell found the image raw and offensive and consoled himself with the belief that the old man, out in the middle of nowhere, didn't know what the yellow haze was and had seized on a scapegoat.

But, as he drove on, he let himself face the truth: that there was much more to understanding the place than driving back roads and fitting music to abrupt topography, and that he was too late. He longed to go on foot into the difficult terrain of the Absarokas, where there were still grizzlies and mountain lions, into the Beartooths, the Wind River and the Washakie ranges, into the Thoroughfare and the Yellowstone backcountry, but was defeated by his ignorance of these most unforgiving roadless wildernesses.

In March, winter briefly cracked open. The wind changed to a warm chinook. The meadows trickled with sheets of water from melting snowdrifts. The

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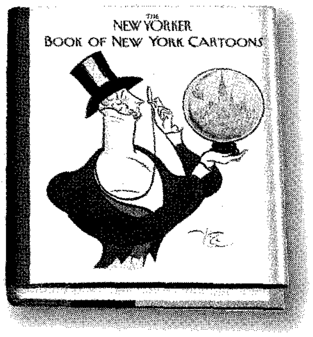
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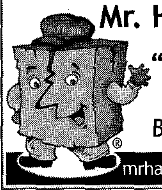

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thermometer touched seventy. Then, overnight, this balmy weather swallowed its own tail and the temperature fell as though drop-kicked off a cliff. The next morning, a black roll cloud crushed the landscape and blasted the icy prairie with billows of snow.

"Spring blizzard," Mitchell said, irritated at being housebound. He gathered up a pile of wildlife magazines and papers, touched a match to the kindling in the fireplace, and settled in for a day of reading. He had become aware of the euphemisms for "killing"—harvest, put down, euthanize. He understood that the wildlife of the place as well as the undisturbed country was under assault. Awful diseases were sweeping through the wild creatures—chronic wasting disease, whirling disease, and mysterious die-offs teamed with loss of habitat and human encroachment on ancient migration routes. He knew that he was seeing the end of this wild world and time. Of course, thought Eugenie when she heard the clink of the decanter lip on his glass, he would not sit by the fire without his whiskey.

It was nearly noon when Eugenie, making a ham-and-cheese casserole, heard Mitchell curse. There was the sound of shattering glass, and she guessed he'd thrown or dropped his whiskey glass on the stone hearth.

"What is it?" she called.

He came shaking into the kitchen, the paper in his hand making a sound like the slats of a venetian blind in an open window.

"These *monsters!*" he said. He held the paper out to her and she read of a teen-ager who, while gathering decorative-landscape stones with his mother and brothers, had, on his ATV, run a pronghorn to exhaustion, then roped and dragged it for a mile behind his machine, stabbed out its eyes, cut off its testicles, and finally set his dogs on the unfortunate animal while his mother and brothers looked on, laughing.

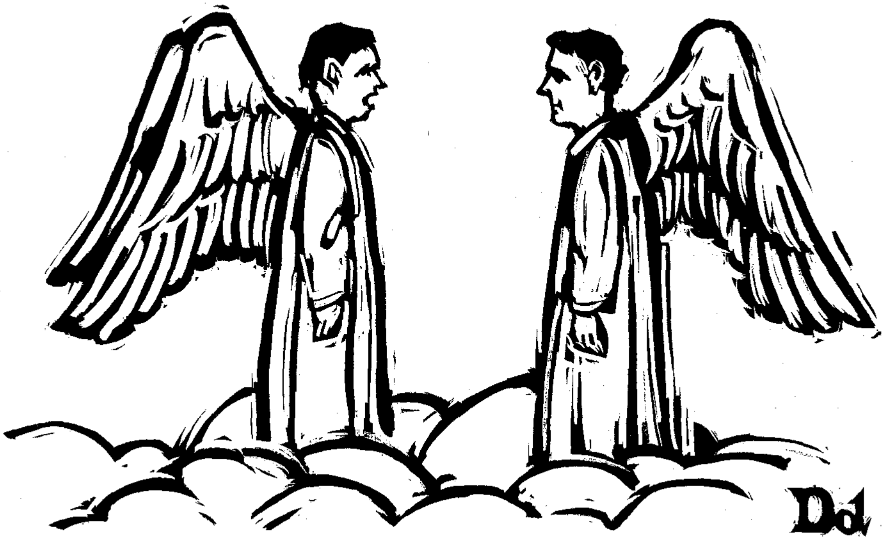
"Oh, no," Eugenie said. Mitchell looked as though he were going to vomit. Eugenie handed the paper back to him. He folded it savagely. There was a squeak of the oven door as Eugenie slid the casserole in. She turned back to Mitchell, sensing his vulnerability as a fox senses the mouse's tunnel beneath the snow.

"Go ahead," said Eugenie. "Now tell me how much you like it here." And with that they both knew that a lever had been inserted in the crack and that it would be prised open.

She began by berating the relentless wind, the storm that was even then holding them prisoners, and the sputtering power outages. Then she veered to the Swift Fox store, where people talked about them behind their backs. Mitchell stood silent, and she knew that he was not hearing her, that he was thinking about the antelope. So she told him about the maniac crawling out of the trees.

"That was the point at which I'd had it," she said. "I'm going back to New York. You can stay here if you like it so much. Go native. Get yourself an ATV and a gun and a knife."

"A man crawling out of the trees? He



"The wings are fantastic, but the thong is a little uncomfortable."

was probably lost or something. What did you do?"

"I called the stupid sheriff's office, and hours later this fat woman came in the sheriff's car and that old rancher woman in her black jeep. They got him and took him somewhere, I don't know where. Probably the hospital. The woman said he had a broken leg."

Of course, Mitchell thought, Eleanora Figg had to be there when Eugenie broke the cardinal rule of the country—that you give aid and help to a stranger, even your bitterest enemy, when he is down.

"We won't be able to stay here," Mitchell said. "This is bad."

"Stay here? Who the hell wants to stay here. I have had it. Do you get that?"

"Yes," Mitchell said, wallowing through his own deep snow and trees toward the open.

"I'll stay with Honor or my parents until I can find my own place. We can sell this damn house and split the money. All I want is to get out." She was pacing back and forth, the kitchen filling with the savory odor of the casserole.

"Honor will take it hard," said Mitchell, but Eugenie gave a barking laugh. "Honor? You fool, she's not even your daughter. I doubt she will, as you put it, 'take it hard.' " She reminded him then of his graduate-student intern, told him about Taylor (whose name she now remembered as Tyler), about Dr. Playfire and the failed DNA match before he'd had his kidney transplant. Mitchell's narrow face went dirty with pain. In lying retaliation, he told Eugenie that the graduate student had been only the first of many.

"Go back to New York and your job and your awful fucking parents," he said. "But I'm sorry about Honor. I love her as my daughter. I always will."

"Love? You don't know anything about love," Eugenie said. A sharp-shinned hawk seized a chickadee from the window bird feeder and there was a spatter of seed against the glass.

"Harvested," said Mitchell.

When the roads were clear three days later, Mitchell drove Eugenie to the Cody airport, where she would catch a connecting flight. He had talked on the phone every day with Honor, both of them swearing that, whatever the stupid DNA tests showed, she was his daughter, he her father. She said she would come out in the summer and see him in his new place. If he had a new place by then.

As he drove slowly along the rows of the nearly full airport parking lot, he and Eugenie saw a coyote loping past the cars as though looking for its vehicle. Mitchell, trying to lighten the tension, remarked that it had to be Wile E. Coyote, driving a Mini Cooper from Acme. Eugenie did not smile, but if he had mentioned semis she would have laughed.

Mitchell lugged her large bags, and she dragged the smaller one, the tiny wheels making a disproportionate rumble on the rough walkway. He stayed with her in the ticket line. At the two-man security checkpoint, they turned toward each other. Nearly everything had been said.

"Goodbye," Mitchell said, embracing her.

"Yes, goodbye," she said into his collar.

On the plane, she looked down on the last of Wyoming, the black mountain ranges capped and splotched with snow, roads like crimped lengths of yarn from unravelled knitting. From on high, it seemed that human geometry had barely scratched the land. There were a few roads, an occasional dammed lake. But most of what lay below was great brown and red curves, scooped cirques, riven canyons with unsteady water in the depths, scalloped rocks whose paler layers resembled lace, eroded slopes that seemed clawed by some monstrous garden tool. On a stringlike road below, the few vehicles were the size of pinheads, crawling fleas. Was this what Mitchell saw when he went on those long drives, the diminution of self, a physical reduction to a single gnat isolated from the greater swarm of gnats? The absurdity of living one's life? She thought she would ask him. But of course that did not happen, and any curiosity on the subject was buried under two new ideas—a cowboy kitchen for urban bachelors, and a kind of ranch kitchen with branding irons crossed over the raised hearth to replace the ultra-modern German style. ♦

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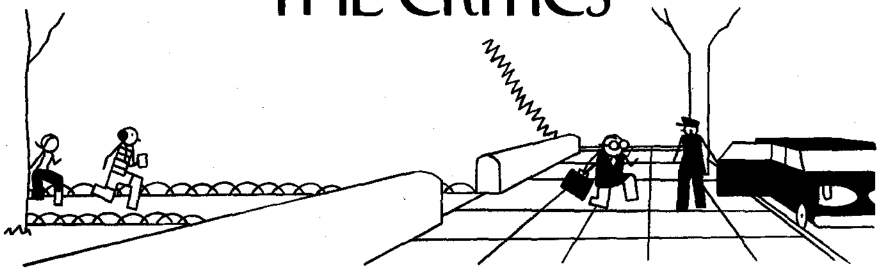


RALPH STEADMAN

BOOKS

TWICE COLLECTED

The well-cared-for poems of Philip Larkin.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

American poetry lovers have of late been treated to two sandbag-size volumes of collected poems: those of James Merrill, edited by J. D. McClatchy and Stephen Yenser, and those of Robert Lowell, edited by Frank Bidart and David Gewanter. The more slender œuvre of the British poet Philip Larkin (1922-85) has been posthumously honored in another style of lavishness, with not one but two "Collected Poems." The earlier volume, edited by Anthony Thwaite, was published here by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 1989, and the second, a hundred pages shorter and also edited by Thwaite, has just been published, also by Farrar, Straus & Giroux (paper; $14). This singular double homage came about not through any carelessness but from an abundance of the caring that Larkin's work arouses in its admirers.

Thwaite, a distinguished poet and critic and a longtime friend of Larkin's, was delighted to discover, as he undertook, in 1986, the duties of a literary executor, that the deceased poet had been a methodical preserver of his own drafts and copious youthful efforts. In a 1959 essay, "Not the Place's Fault," on his boyhood, in Coventry, Larkin remembered, "I wrote ceaselessly . . . now verse, which I sewed up into little books, now prose, a thousand words a night after homework." Seven of the little books were among his effects, four dating from the period between September of 1939 and August of 1940, and three produced in 1941 and 1942, when he was at Oxford. From 1944 on, Larkin, setting up shop as a postgraduate writer, preserved and dated his handwritten drafts, as they moved toward typed, corrected, and final versions. He had become, after his graphomaniacal boyhood, a scrupulously slow and patient reviser. Thwaite cites the eight-line poem "Take One Home for the Kiddies," which was begun in April of 1954 and completed in August of 1960. Less prolonged but effortfully fitful was the progress of two of Larkin's finest longer poems. Thwaite reports:

> "Church Going," begun on 24 April 1954, went through twenty-one pages of drafts, was "abandoned 24.5.54," and then resumed and completed in July of that year. "The Whitsun Weddings," begun in May 1957 with its first stanza complete, was then dropped, resumed in July 1958, reworked for twenty-three pages until 6 September, picked up again on 19 September and completed after eight further pages of drafts on 18 October.

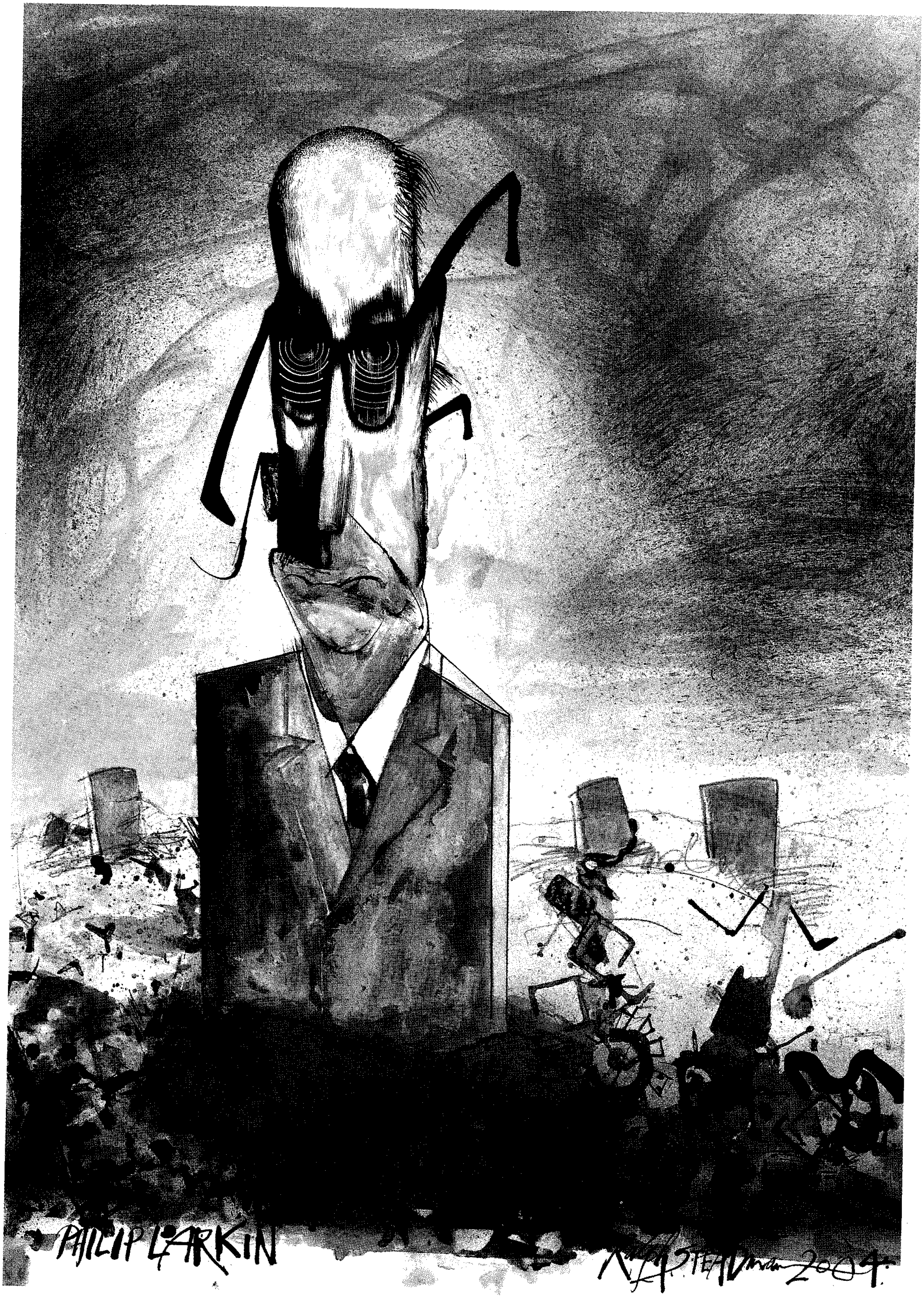
Given this unlooked-for wealth of creative specifics, Thwaite and his fellow-executors decided to produce a chronological arrangement that ignored the order Larkin himself had used in his four commercially published collections—"The North Ship" (1945), "The Less Deceived" (1955), "The Whitsun Weddings" (1964), and "High Windows" (1974). The first "Collected" opens not with the poems of "The North Ship" but with the earliest poem, "Going," that Larkin chose to publish in "The Less Deceived." Thwaite's introduction calls it "the first poem of his maturity." "Going" is followed, however, by a number of poems not included in "The Less Deceived" but appearing, rather, in the unpublished collection "In the Grip of Light" (1947) or in the self-published "XX Poems" (1951), which Larkin pulled together after "The North Ship," published by the raffish Reginald Caton's small Fortune Press, sank with scarcely a trace.

Thwaite incorporated a number of poems never published by Larkin in any form and in some cases left unfinished. Some of the unfinished poems, like "Negative Indicative" and the hundred-and-thirty-two-line "The Dance," come from Larkin's prime and evince his characteristic graces. Some finished poems that Thwaite includes, such as "The March Past" and "The Winter Palace," were excluded by Larkin from his own collections. To the main section, titled "Poems 1946-83," Thwaite appended a second, "Early Poems 1938-45," containing seventy adolescent, collegiate, and postcollegiate poems (including the contents of "The North Ship") that the author had long left in his wake. More than one critic protested the editorial discourtesy of running the good and the indifferent, the aborted and the canonical all together, and in an order not of the poet's choosing.

The first "Collected Poems" has the undoubted interest of a chronological arrangement: the successive items flicker in and out of focus as they lose and recover one sensibility's peculiar genius. In their recurrent obsessions and tone, the stronger poems reach backward and forward to their equally achieved kindred while the weaker sisters duck their heads. The reader sees, as Thwaite's introduction promises, "the growth of a major poet, testing, filtering, rejecting, modulating, achieving." And he sees not just growth but sclerosis, as Larkin's production all but ceased in his last decade—one of the more striking poetic abnegations since Rimbaud's. There was one soaring exception to his painful silence, "Aubade," of 1977, the last and bluntest and stateliest expression of his lifelong dread of death:

> the total emptiness for ever,
> The sure extinction that we travel to
> And shall be lost in always. Not to be
> here,
> Not to be anywhere,
> And soon; nothing more terrible, nothing
> more true.

Larkin was a mere fifty-five when he wrote those lines. How interesting it is to see the unblinking honesty, the quiet wit, the easy metrical intricacy get in gear


PHILIP LARKIN
STEADMAN 2004.

once more, and then, but for a few personal or official verses, shut down.

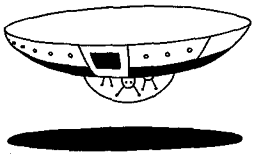
There is interest, too, in the pre-1946 poems, wherein Auden's jaunty knowing and Yeats's vatic largeness and Eliot's dour, mocking music conspire with a faux-rural imagery of wind and sea and sun and trees and heart and blood to enwrap the young Larkin in a fog of abstraction and myth that delay his arrival at the mundane realism, vivid in each wistful, shabby detail, that we know will become his. The early poems are frustratingly obscure, addressed to vague nymphs by a speaker entranced by his own coldness. Usually brief, they end with empty flourishes: "I take you now and for always, / For always is always now"; "Pour away that youth / That overflows the heart . . . walk with the dead / For fear of death"; "And grief stirs, and the deft / Heart lies impotent"; "No gale-driven bird / Nor frost-encircled root / As cold as my heart." These sentiments, inverted valentines, as yet lack their objective correlatives in workaday England. They strike poses in a humorless vacuum.

The second, present version of "Collected Poems" forms Thwaite's reply to the criticism of the first. A terse introduction describes the earlier chronological ordering and explains that the new edition is "partly a considered response to suggestions that what was needed, too, was a book that followed Larkin's own deliberate ordering of his poems in each successive book . . . with perhaps an appendix taking in earlier published strays and also a handful of poems after *High Windows* had gone to press." Unfinished poems and poems never published by Larkin in any venue are omitted. Of the juvenilia, only a poem printed in *The Listener* when Larkin was eighteen and seven poems from Oxford publications are included, with none from the secondary-school *Coventrian*.

Having patiently read both versions of "Collected Poems," this reviewer opines that the second, chastened version, confined to the four trade volumes that Larkin supervised and the uncollected poems "published in other places," does give the verse itself a better shake. The type is slightly smaller, producing fewer runover lines. Without the date and bibliographical ascription accompanying each poem on the page, as in the first volume, there is a space in which the historical figure "testing, filtering," etc., yields to the presence that the poet was seeking to exert in the text. "The North Ship," for instance, with most of its thirty-two poems titled simply, as originally, with Roman numerals instead of, as in the first "Collected," an empty iteration, in bigger type, of the first line, acquires a collective personality, that of a palely loitering prewar knight seeking to work out a murky relationship—though it seems to be he, and not the belle dame, who lacks mercy. There is something courtly and metaphysically intricate here, reminiscent of those amorous sonnets, by Wyatt and Surrey and Spenser and Shakespeare, which marked the renascence of English poetry. A conflicted sensibility is seeking its terms. Yeats's magical world, with its emblematic winds and streams and ships and gold, here and there blends with a world of gritty experience:

> The bottle is drunk out by one;
> At two, the book is shut;
> At three, the lovers lie apart . . .
> I lie and wait for morning, and the birds,
> The first steps going down the unswept street,
> Voices of girls with scarves around their heads.

The order in which the items of a collection are arranged may seem a negligible detail, but for the writer or the editor to whom the duty of arrangement falls it matters considerably. Thwaite quotes Larkin's jocular explanation "I treat them like a music-hall bill: you know, contrast, difference in length, the comic, the Irish tenor, bring on the girls." The orderer, generally, wishes to begin and end on a high, defining note; to mix weak with strong, shorter with longer, formal with free; and to lead the ideal reader along a certain contour of implied argument. "The Less Deceived," the collection that followed, after ten years, the youthful "North Ship," opens with the full-throated "Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album," in nine strictly rhymed *abbab* stanzas—Larkin's development, unusually, combined a more elaborate metrical formality with a more relaxed, plainer voice. Here, in an affectionate but astringent meditation on a female friend's photographed past, the playful poet earnestly explores how the images lacerate him "simply by being over." His exclusion from the past that "holds you like a heaven" has positive consequences: "It leaves us free to cry" and flatters the subject, who in these frozen images is "unvariably lovely . . . Smaller and clearer as the years go by." The next poem, "Wedding-Wind," dates back to 1946, and reverts to Yeatsian exaltation. This heroine, like the photographed young lady, finds herself redeemed from inexorable time, symbolized here by the wind's incessant blowing. A bride's joy defies change:



> Shall I be let to sleep
> Now this perpetual morning shares my bed?
> Can even death dry up
> These new delighted lakes?

The poet speaks directly in the next poem, "Places, Loved Ones." The rootless, self-deprived Larkin persona proclaims his failure to find "the place where I could say / *This is my proper ground, / Here I shall stay*" and to meet "that special one / Who has an instant claim / On everything I own / Down to my name." The theme of a puzzled yet irremediable and somewhat satisfactory isolation continues to preside in "Coming" ("I, whose childhood / Is a forgotten boredom") and in "Reasons for Attendance" and "Dry-Point," both about drawing back from sex. In the first, he watches, through a window, young dancers "Shifting intently, face to flushed face, / Solemnly on the beat of happiness" while he stands outside, nursing his artistic vocation:

> Surely, to think the lion's share
> Of happiness is found by couples—sheer
>
> Inaccuracy, as far as I'm concerned.
> What calls me is that lifted, rough-tongued bell
> (Art, if you like) whose individual sound
> Insists I too am individual.

In "Dry-Point," the poet has experienced sex—"Bestial, intent, real"—and mourns the "sad scapes" and "salted, shrunken lakes" (lakes again!) that ensue; yet he also, if I read the lines aright, dislikes "that bare and sunscrubbed room . . . that padlocked cube of light" where sex obtains no entry. "Next, Please" carries the poet's disappointed hopes into the brilliant extended metaphor of a sighted "armada of promises" that draw near but never land. Although "We think each one will heave to and unload / All good into our lives," only one ship seeks us, "black-sailed" death, "towing at her back / A huge and birdless silence." Death, then, joins sex and singleness as an underlying topic. The next poem, "Going," begins, eerily, "There is an evening coming in / Across the fields, one never seen before, / That lights no lamps," and ends by entering into the consciousness of a corpse: "What is under my hands, / That I cannot feel? / What loads my hands down?" The succeeding "Wants" awards death a certificate of approval, declaring, in its two refrains, that there are two wants—"Beyond all this, the wish to be alone" and "Beneath it all, desire of oblivion." The tenth poem, "Maiden Name," returns to the mode of apostrophe, addressing in courtly fashion a woman who could be the object of the opening poem; she is charged this time with abandoning her maiden name, which still "shelters our faithfulness, / Instead of losing shape and meaning less / With your depreciating luggage laden."

These ten poems compose a suite, leading the reader through variations on themes—aging, marriage, the pursuit of happiness, the certainty of death—that circumscribe a personality and a much mulled personal situation related to the chronic coldness of the less resolute, less objective voice of "The North Ship." The matured voice both questions and confirms the morose celibacy of a temperamental loner dedicated to his art. He views the active, hopeful, mating world now with a wry love, now with a sharp exasperation, but always through death's dark glass. There is a certain Byronic pride in the poet's inconsolability. Celebrating, in "No Road," a broken-off affair, Larkin concludes:

> To watch that world come up like a cold
>   sun,
> Rewarding others, is my liberty.
> Not to prevent it is my will's fulfilment.
> Willing it, my ailment.

The collection's masterpiece, "Church Going," views an empty church, visited by the poet on a bicycle, from an archeological distance. He observes its wilting Sunday flowers, hears its "tense, musty, unignorable silence, / Brewed God knows how long," and wonders:

> When churches fall completely out of use
> What we shall turn them into . . .
> Power of some sort or other will go on
> In games, in riddles, seemingly at random;
> But superstition, like belief, must die,
> And what remains when disbelief has gone?
> Grass, weedy pavement, brambles, buttress,
>   sky.

His ruminations drift effortlessly down the intricate *ababcadcd* rhyme pattern of the seven stanzas to the faint but sweet faith that a church will always attract a visit from someone who "will forever be surprising / A hunger in himself to be more serious, / And gravitating with it to this ground." The solitary atheist breaks through to identification with the masses of past worshippers ("so many dead lie round"), much as, in the later, even more epiphanic "The Whitsun Weddings," the bachelor poet eventually, along with the holy-day newlyweds who have boarded his London-bound train, partakes of "all the power / That being changed can give." Though he is held back from change, from the risky and foolish plunge of marriage, he sympathetically participates; it was Larkin's capacity, for all his caustic shyness, to embrace the common experience of a depleted, post-imperial England that made his poetry beloved. The dislikable crustiness displayed in passages of his letters, also edited by Thwaite, and in Andrew Motion's biography should have come as no surprise, since the drama of his greatest poems hinges on the breaking of his crust and attaining a generous, deep-breathing self-transcendence. Later poems achieve identification with the poor women, "moustached in flowered frocks," who submit to the ministrations of an American faith healer ("Faith Healing") and with the wives of men killed in a mine explosion ("The Explosion"):

>   for a second
> Wives saw men of the explosion
>
> Larger than in life they managed—
> Gold as on a coin, or walking
> Somehow from the sun towards them.

In "The Less Deceived," the poems that follow "Church Going" ring changes on the tune of stoic depression, of life being (in "Age") a "tall game I tired myself with joining" and (in "Triple Time") "Threadbare perspectives, seasonal decrease." Employed for five years as a sub-librarian in the Queen's University Li-

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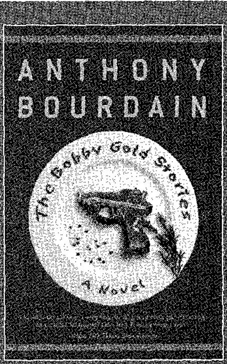

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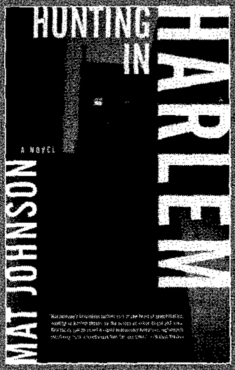

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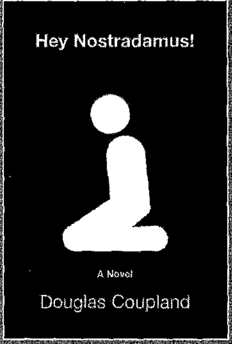

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brary in Belfast, and about to become the head of the library at the University of Hull, he addresses "the toad *work*" ("Toads") and accepts its lifelong companionship, "For something sufficiently toad-like / Squats in me, too." In an especially curious twist of identification, a young woman's rape, recorded in Henry Mayhew's "London Labour and the London Poor," imposes Larkin's own postcoital letdown, confessed in other poems, upon the rape's anonymous perpetrator, "stumbling up the breathless stair / To burst into fulfilment's desolate attic" ("Deceptions"). The image of a desolate attic recurs in "Absences," one of Larkin's brief, painterly landscape studies. A crashing sea is evoked and, above it, the cloud-filled sky:

> Above the sea, the yet more shoreless day,
> Riddled by wind, trails lit-up galleries:
> They shift to giant ribbing, sift away.
>
> Such attics cleared of me! Such absences!

The suddenly personal image is surreal, as is the premise, two poems later ("If, My Darling"), that his darling has leaped into his head, to "find herself looped with the creep of varying light, / Monkey-brown, fish-grey, a string of infected circles / Loitering like bullies, about to coagulate." A grotesque and rueful physicality persists: "Skin" addresses his integument as "an old bag / Carrying a soiled name," and begs its pardon for finding, "when you were new, / No brash festivity / To wear you at." But life is not composed entirely of missed opportunities; the last poem in "The Less Deceived," like the first, looks back upon an active past, in this case ("At Grass") the triumphs—"The starting-gates, the crowds and cries"—of pastured racehorses quietly "at grass" fifteen years later. They have lived, as do poets in their moments of accelerated inspiration.

A quite random or a strictly chronological ordering of a collection might also achieve some harmonies and happy juxtapositions, but only the poet's own arrangement carries the sense of a conversation with him, as he proposes and rethinks and offers yet another concretion of his private reality, "each one," as Larkin says in another context, "double-yolked with meaning and meaning's rebuttal." In the parlance of sound engineers there is something called "room tone"—the auditory impression of silence in a certain chamber. Recording some of it, while performers are present though holding their breath, is essential to the editing process. A poet's own arrangement has his private room tone, and with a technician as skillful and perfectionist as Larkin this elusive quality is not negligible. Therefore, the second "Collected," holding the four slim collections as he fine-tuned them, should take priority on the poetry lover's shelf.

The first is so close to an edition for scholars that pedantic concern intrudes upon aesthetic pleasure; we rather miss the fragments that Thwaite mentions but leaves out. His earlier introduction fascinatingly specified the unfinished "When I see Literature," from 1950, "addressed to a personified figure called 'Literature' "; "extensive drafts of a poem on the dates of coins and their significance to him . . . written in the summer of 1954"; "attempts at four poems on the seasons, written at about the same time"; "a long poem, called 'The Duration,' beginning 'It was like a war,' which takes up fifteen pages of drafts between April and June 1969; and what was apparently his final struggle with a substantial poem, 'Letters to my mind,' drafted in October and November 1979."

Larkin, though modest in manner and production, achieved major eloquence and formal perfection, and was esteemed in the world of general readers to a degree that, among poets, only John Betjeman and Dylan Thomas matched in postwar Great Britain. The weight of depression he carried endures as a severe purity in his poems. It would seem that at some point early in his development he retracted any large hopes for human interaction. In "A Girl in Winter," the second of his two published novels (and why only two, when they are so good?), his heroine, Katherine Lind, foresees:

> Life would be happy insofar as she was happy, sad insofar as she was sad. The happiness would depend on her youth and health, and would help no-one. When she was ill, it would drop away, like the flame of a wick being turned down; when she grew old, it would be thin and infrequent. And in these times no other thing or person would be able to help her, though they might try sincerely, and she might try equally sincerely to be helped. But they would not be able to touch any more than people standing ten yards apart can take each other's hands.

Yet his poems, though cramped by pessimism and self-distrust, do reach out. He wrote two kinds of masterpiece. There are the short, chiming summations of life's meagre prospects; they begin "They fuck you up, your mum and dad. / They may not mean to, but they do" ("This Be the Verse") and "Sexual intercourse began / In nineteen sixty-three / (Which was rather late for me)—/ Between the end of the *Chatterley* ban / And the Beatles' first LP" ("Annus Mirabilis") and "Home is so sad. It stays as it was left, / Shaped to the comfort of the last to go / As if to win them back" ("Home Is So Sad"). Such lapidary compression recalls Ben Jonson and Robert Herrick, and returned in modern times with A. E. Housman and Yeats's more songlike verses.

Then, there are Larkin's great longer poems—"Church Going," "The Whitsun Weddings," "The Old Fools," "Dockery and Son," "Aubade." Their voice—ruminative, frank, levelly idiomatic, and seemingly unconscious of itself as poetic—harks back to the voice of Wordsworth's self-explorations, his voice of cogitation and confession, grown loose and prosy in "The Prelude" and at its most thrilling in "Tintern Abbey," as his eye processes the scene before it:

> These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
> Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
> Green to the very door.

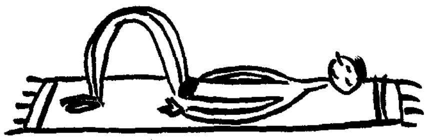
Wordsworth's prescription for poetry, stated in the 1800 introduction to "Lyrical Ballads"—"fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation"—still applies to this modern case. Both poets began with the same ingredients: self-preoccupation and an instinctive response to nature. Larkin's early poems, forced and contorted as they seem, did not falsify; wind and sea and sun and green growth spoke to him. His human sadness measures itself against nature, setting our mortality (in "The Trees") against the tireless green cycles ("Yet still the unresting castles thresh / In fullgrown thickness every May. / Last year is dead, they seem to say, / Begin afresh, afresh, afresh"). A few years from his own end, the poet knelt down to extract a dead hedgehog from a mower's blades ("The Mower") and drew the elemental moral

> we should be careful
> Of each other, we should be kind
> While there is still time. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

This Man's Army, *by Andrew Exum (Gotham; $25).* Two years ago, at the age of twenty-three, Exum led a platoon into combat in Afghanistan. He wasn't a typical soldier: an Ivy League graduate with a double major in classics and English, he voted for Gore and read Kant during downtime in Ranger training. Nevertheless, he excels in depicting the ordinary, unglamorous side of warfare—whiling away months of boring duty by pulling puerile pranks, instigating fistfights, and pasting porn pictures on the backs of official maps. Short on revelation, this memoir qua military history is largely a polemic on behalf of the Army grunt. Exum is as unsparing in his disdain for Pentagon "desk jockeys" and overweight staff officers as he is for peaceniks and "holier-than-thou" reporters. "No matter a war's outcome," he concludes, "the soldier never wins."

Idiot Proof, *by Francis Wheen (PublicAffairs; $25).* Looking back on the last quarter-century, Wheen, a British journalist, sees a disturbing recrudescence of irrationalists, including "holy warriors, antiscientific relativists, economic fundamentalists, radical postmodernists, New Age mystics." American politicians routinely resort to "intense sentimentality" to sway voters; C.E.O.s lure investors with talk of "faith" in place of assets; Christian evangelists opine that September 11th is "probably what we deserve" for allowing feminists and the A.C.L.U. to flourish. In perhaps the silliest example, a consultant advises British civil servants to wear different colored hats for different tasks: red for developing hunches, yellow for cheering, black for questioning. It's hard to quarrel with the foolishness of some of Wheen's targets. But his larger thesis—that Ayatollah Khomeini and Margaret Thatcher spearheaded a retreat from the values of the Enlightenment back toward those of the Middle Ages—is so thinly reasoned as to seem to warrant its own entry in Wheen's encyclopedia absurdica.



Darkly Dreaming Dexter, *by Jeff Lindsay (Doubleday; $22.95).* Dexter Morgan, the namesake of Lindsay's first novel, is one of the most likable vigilante serial killers in recent thriller literature. This is mainly because of his average Joe-ness: he's a Miami police-department blood-spatter analyst with a weakness for bowling shirts and *batidos*, who, when the moon is full, carves up villains in a careful ritual, keeping a single drop of blood on a slide as a souvenir. (He's collected thirty-six so far.) When other victims start popping up, dispatched with the same creativity as Dexter's, he pursues the copycat murderer with acute professional self-interest. Like other charismatic killers—Hannibal Lecter, say, or Tom Ripley—Dexter has a set of motives that are tough to untangle. But his quest proves weirdly convincing as he ponders whether to turn his doppelgänger over to the cops or take care of the problem himself.

Lichtenberg and the Little Flower Girl, *by Gert Hofmann, translated from the German by Michael Hofmann (New Directions; $23.95).* Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, an eighteenth-century Göttingen mathematician, physicist, and astronomer, is remembered for the satiric aphorisms he wrote in his spare time, which have been celebrated by luminaries from Nietzsche to Einstein. He was also a dwarf and a hunchback, attributes crucial to this lively fictionalization of his life by the late German novelist, which charts Lichtenberg's love affair with the progress of civilization and, in parallel, his failure to find a wife. Hofmann gives the scientist a delirious, childish glee at the universe's workings, and a sweetness of character that, true to Lichtenberg's biography, eventually wins him the love of a thirteen-year-old beauty. The author shares with his hero a gift for the epigram, which makes the book seem at first a rather weightless affair. But a mass of loneliness and longing just beneath the comedy keeps it from floating away.

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THE THEATRE

MUCH ADO IN MESSINA

Star turns in a Shakespeare comedy.

BY HILTON ALS

The idiosyncratic, perpetually boyish, and unequivocally American actor Sam Waterston is giving the performance of his career as the alternately loving, baffled, and furious patriarch Leonato in Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" (at the Delacorte Theatre, in Central Park). The governor of Messina, on the island of Sicily, Leonato is also the father of Hero (played by Waterston's own daughter, the lovely Elisabeth Waterston) and the guardian of Beatrice, his niece (Kristen Johnston). At first, Leonato is the most genial father figure imaginable. He's as impressed and unthreatened by Beatrice, with her verbal dexterity and her disdain for the less fair sex, as he is by his more magnanimous daughter, who has the ability to calm her cousin's blustery nature. More often than not, Leonato is amused by the way Hero plays the femme to Beatrice's butch.

But when, in Act IV, his faith in his daughter is shaken—Hero's intended, Claudio (Lorenzo Pisoni), accuses her of infidelity just moments before they're to be married—Leonato's love turns to cold gray ash. Waterston skillfully lets us see the embers burning beneath. Looking directly at Hero, who is dressed in virginal confectionary white, Leonato sees nothing but black. "But mine, and mine I loved, and mine I praised," he gasps, barely pausing for breath. "And mine that I was proud on; mine so much / That I myself was to myself not mine, / Valuing of her—why she, O she is fallen / Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea / Hath drops too few to wash her clean again, / And salt too little which may season give / To her foul, tainted flesh." It's a nightmarish moment, and it is almost unbearable to watch this Lear-like wrath fall on its passive, defenseless victim (Hero has fainted before the speech begins). But Waterston also lends pathos to Leonato's disgust—one's heart breaks as he flings invective—transforming Shakespeare's rage into an aria about the shattering of a dream. Leonato's dream, as Waterston presents it, was twofold. For him, Hero's wedding was a guarantee of a happy future for his daughter, one in which she would be loved and protected. It was proof, too, that he had succeeded as a father, that his daughter had matured into a caring, ethical being. Now that her double nature has been exposed—wrongly, of course—how can Leonato keep his grip on everything he once held dear? Ink runs through one's fingers, as does salt water.

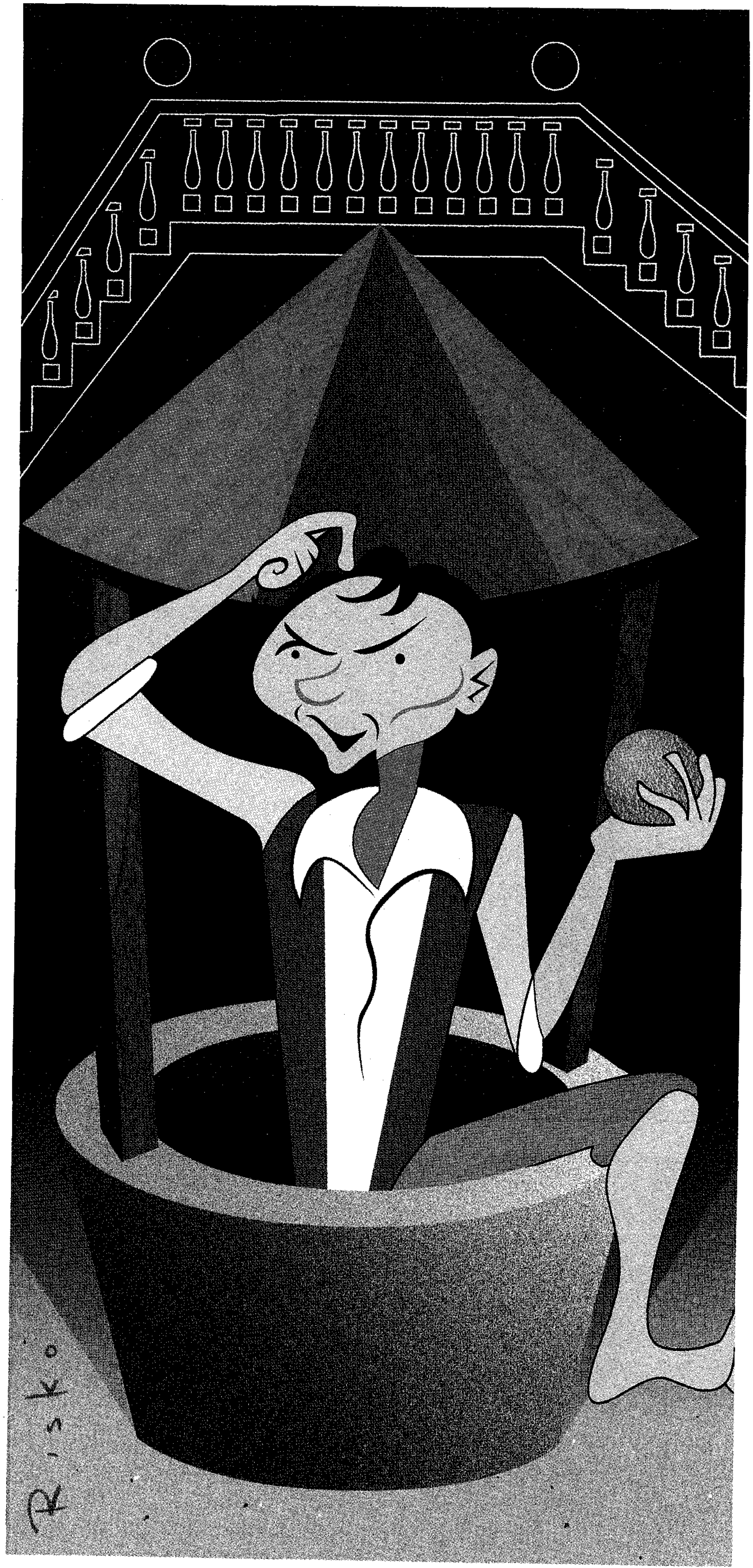
Part of what makes Waterston's performance so arresting is his history as an actor in "Much Ado," one of Shakespeare's more emotionally challenging comedies. Thirty-two years ago, Waterston played Benedick, opposite the astonishing Kathleen Widdoes as Beatrice, in A. J. Antoon's celebrated staging, also at the Delacorte. (The production was filmed and is now available on DVD, as part of the invaluable Broadway Theatre Archives series.) As Benedick, Claudio's friend and fellow war hero, Waterston was as thin and lyrical as a river reed: his beauty lay in the delicacy of his projection and in his disarming awkwardness. He seemed to want to do anything *but* fight with Beatrice, which was an odd and refreshing interpretation of the role, given that Benedick and Beatrice's verbal sparring makes up the comic center of the play. In the current production, Waterston has not lost any of that charming hesitancy—he is a great listener when other actors take the stage—but one can see, too, how the gravitas that comes with time and experience has made him *more* than charming, has turned up the volume on his soul.

Here, Benedick, as played by Jimmy Smits, is all bluster and testosterone—a baby with chest hair. Smits's unabashed desire to be liked—to be loved by anyone but Beatrice, at first—wins the audience over. His formidable comedic skills could, however, have been tempered a little by the director, David Esbjornson, who treats the play as a kind of Restoration farce—transplanting it to the late nineteenth century and thus sacrificing or blurring some of Shakespeare's intricacy in favor of easy laughs and aural pratfalls.

In the end, though, this confusion may be the fault not of the director, who does the best he can, but of the play, which has so many trapdoors of intention and betrayal and missed opportunity that it's a wonder any of the actors remain standing at the show's end. Among other plot twists: Claudio fought alongside Benedick under the command of Don Pedro (Peter Francis James), a prince who now serves as "Much Ado" 's matchmaker and offers to woo Hero in the bashful Claudio's stead. Don Pedro's resentful and surly bastard brother, Don John (Christopher Evan Welch), works to disrupt the courtship with rumors and staged deceptions—and succeeds for several acts. In a no-nonsense 1946 lecture on the play, W. H. Auden wrote, "The first thing to notice about 'Much Ado About Nothing' is that the subplot overwhelms and overshadows the main plot . . . the story of Hero and Claudio and the conspiracy of Don John. Shakespeare treats the story perfunctorily, and except for Don John, it's boring. And Shakespeare shows some carelessness in putting it together."

As the various threads unravel, one may find one's interest drifting. Don John is spurred on in his need to destroy Hero and Claudio's love by the scornful way that he has been treated by society, but how he's been wronged and why his outsider status is such a great motivating factor never become entirely clear. Don John is a fantastic Shakespearean villain—Iago's younger brother—but he's almost *too* fantastic, too unexamined, to be anything more than a plot device. The audience, instead of seeing why he does what he does, is told only what he will do next. In the end, the showy disaster we've been waiting for does not occur. Don John's evil, which only momentarily besmirches Hero's reputation, is a relatively small, domestic one; he is not a menacing monster but a mouse trapped under the rug. Annoying as he is, he doesn't provide enough of a counterbalance to the almost cloying purity of Hero and Claudio's love. Even as they're involved in their various trysts—have any two lovers, other than Romeo and Juliet, ever had so much to say?—you find yourself longing for Benedick and Beatrice to cut through the saccharine with a little linguistic strychnine. (As Auden notes, "They are the characters of Shakespeare we'd most like to sit next to at dinner.")

Benedick and Beatrice make for a more satisfying pair because they're involved, for most of the play, in a very real drama: terrified of the vulnerability and need they'll have to reveal to make a commitment and declare their love, they tease and berate each other from a distance. Pound for pound, Johnston matches Smits in broadness of effect—she's Tallulah Bankhead by way of Betty Hutton—but, like her co-star, she has been directed to play nearly everything for laughs, thus quashing some of the nuance and intelligence that Widdoes drew from the role. Still, the comparison is perhaps unfair: Widdoes used her face brilliantly, with the expressiveness of a trained film and stage actress, whereas what makes Johnston such a reliable, and potentially great, comedienne is her voice. A sour bellow tinged with hope, it is one of the glories of the American theatre. Like Smits (of "NYPD Blue") and Waterston ("Law & Order"), Johnston made her name primarily on television (she won two Emmys for her role as an emissary from outer space on "3rd Rock from the Sun"). She's playing catch-up now in the theatre. (She has appeared at the Delacorte twice in recent years—in "Twelfth Night" and in Thornton Wilder's "The Skin of Our Teeth," as a rip-roaring Sabina, a role that Bankhead originated—and she gave a bravura performance in the 2003 Off Broadway revival of Wallace Shawn's "Aunt Dan and Lemon.") As a student of the stage, Johnston is fortunate to be playing alongside Waterston, whose intention is not only to entertain but to explain words, great and small, by illustrating them with his body. He has the rare clarity that comes with knowing your character's intention and, at the same time, feeling it. ♦



Jimmy Smits is all bluster and testosterone in "Much Ado About Nothing."

ROBERT RISKO

ON TELEVISION

EMOTIONAL RESCUE

A new drama with its roots in Ground Zero.

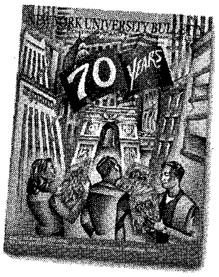
BY NANCY FRANKLIN

It seems incredible now that there was ever a time when you might have walked by a firehouse in New York City and not thought about the lives of the people who worked inside, even if your lack of attention was in some ways a form of respect, an acknowledgment that mere curiosity wasn't a good enough justification for looking too closely, for intruding on the privacy of people who lived with death, and faced death, every day. That privacy was blown apart on September 11, 2001, and it is not likely ever to be restored completely, although we started to hear, just a few weeks after three hundred and forty-three firefighters had died at the World Trade Center, and while hundreds of others were still recovering body parts from Ground Zero, that most of the men wanted only to return to their routines, to cook for themselves again instead of eating meals provided by grateful New Yorkers, and to stop bearing the burden of being treated as heroes every waking minute of their lives. Thousands of stories have been written about firefighters since that day, but to a great extent the thick red wall that separates these men from the rest of us remains, as it always will; unless you are a member of this family, you can never know all its secrets.

The television shows set in New York that were on the air at the time found a way to "deal" with September 11th, by threading in new story lines or by adding a special episode or, in cases where a show's fictional universe had no room for something so real, by including visual indicators (Joey on "Friends" wearing an F.D.N.Y. T-shirt), but Denis Leary and Peter Tolan's new FX drama, "Rescue Me," which starts Wednesday, July 21st, is the first new series to rise out of the ashes of that day. (TNT's limited series "The Grid," which also starts this week, has similar roots—Dylan McDermott plays an F.B.I. agent whose best friend died in the World Trade Center—but its focus is Islamic fundamentalism and the new world disorder. Despite wooden performances from McDermott and Julianna Margulies, as a counterterrorism expert, "The Grid" is involving and impressively complex.) "Rescue Me" is a daring, unflinching show—a worthy companion to FX's dark-hearted police drama "The Shield"—and it is unafraid to expose the not always pretty particulars of firehouse culture and the more fallible side of those we count on to save us.

Leary's persona as a comedian is that of a pissed-off, profane, politically incorrect ordinary guy, which serves him well in roles that call for him to react visibly and volubly to stressful situations, such as the smart-mouthed, substance-abusing cop he played in his and Tolan's short-lived 2001 series, "The Job" (in one episode, he was forced to take anger-management classes, at the same time that he was trying to quit smoking and drinking). In "Rescue Me," Leary plays Tommy Gavin, a fireman who's congenitally spoiling for a fight; in the pilot, he announces that if a shrink comes to his firehouse to try to get the men to talk about their feelings, "I'm gonna kick his ass," and he tells a group of new academy graduates that "my balls are bigger than two of your heads duct-taped together." But his blustering doesn't fool his demons. He knew sixty men who died on September 11th, including four from his own house, one of whom, Jimmy Keefe, was his cousin and best friend. As seems to be happening more and more on TV shows anytime a character thinks about a dead loved one, the ghost of Jimmy (James McCaffrey) has a way of showing up, in Tommy's car, or in his house, whenever he needs a talking to, such as the day he starts swigging whiskey again after fourteen months on the wagon. (Miller beer is a major sponsor of "Rescue Me," and underwrote the series'

Satisfy your curiosity.



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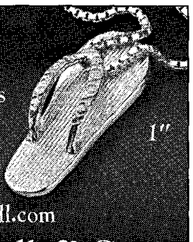

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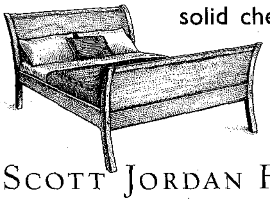

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commercial-free première, which explains why Jimmy's drink of choice is Miller Lite, and why, in the third episode, Tommy and his chief pop open a couple of Miller Genuine Drafts. That's creative advertising, or something: having a character with a drinking problem promote your line of alcoholic beverages.) Jimmy's ghost and Tommy have a bantering, brotherly relationship; when Jimmy disappears during a conversation, Tommy mutters, "Asshole," and when Jimmy prods his cousin about his wife's complaint that he's not emotionally available, Tommy answers defensively, "Oh, and *you* are?" (Jimmy counters, unassailably, "Hey, I got an excuse—I'm dead.")

Denis Leary as a New York City firefighter struggling to move on with his life.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

Leary's fighting-Irish characters can be exhausting after a while—they tend to careen from overbearing pugnacity to morose regretfulness, without stopping for long on any middle ground, but that pattern makes sense in "Rescue Me," since Tommy's life has no middle ground. In addition to being bereft of his best friend and having to live with the many undigestible facts of September 11th—one of them being that all that was found of Jimmy was a finger—he is separated from his wife, Janet (Andrea Roth), who has a new boyfriend and is thinking of moving to California, and he's enraged at the thought of losing his three kids. But part of what makes the show feel authentic is the flashes of humor, usually black humor, that tie Leary's limited tones together into a rounded performance. The drama in "Rescue Me" is filled out by the kinds of moments that are not reported in feature stories, because they can't be; no outsider would ever be witness to them. Some of them are domestic—an argument Tommy has with his wife about the meaning of "or so," as in "I'll be home at five o'clock or so," or the cash he dispenses to his kids in exchange for information about his wife's boyfriend. Some of them take place at the firehouse; when a crew member complains about a woman's having rebuffed him the night before, and Tommy expresses surprise that he was making a play for someone he didn't even find attractive, his buddy says, "Hey, Tommy, it's gettin' slow out there, pal. All that pussy I was gettin' after 9/11? Now nothin'. People forget." Tommy stares at him, with the sympathetic indulgence you grant a friend who has a point but is being a bit of a jerk, and says, "Sad commentary." This exchange comes at the beginning of the first episode, as fair warning of the show's frankness; its casualness may shock some people, but it jibes with what everyone knows to be true anecdotally, which is that for a long time after September 11th virtually every New Yorker was willing to provide comfort to any fireman in any form that he wanted it.

Viewers will be taking their temperature throughout "Rescue Me," checking to see whether they are ready for a series that probes so many still-open wounds, but much of the show has to do with the basic nature of firehouse life, which, paradoxically, is something we probably wouldn't have been ready to see before the events of 2001. Tacitly sanctioned homophobia, the hazing of probationary firemen, the dead-serious rivalry with the police department, the brotherly competition to be the big dog are all part of the fabric of the show. Leary and Tolan have written parts for the other firefighters in Tommy's house which are just as good as Leary's (as they did for Leary's precinct-mates in "The Job"), and have given them some memorably painful scenes in addition to some very funny ones. Near the end of the first episode, Jimmy, the three other members of the crew who died on September 11th, and the ghosts of two children whom Tommy had plucked from fires but who died horrible deaths from their injuries anyway join him as he is sitting on a beach at sunrise, drinking whiskey from the bottle. They follow him when he leaves the beach, and it's clear that they will be with him forever. This isn't sentimental guesswork on Leary's part—five years ago, his own cousin and a childhood friend were two of six firemen who died fighting a fire in his home town of Worcester, Massachusetts. After that, Leary started a foundation to raise money for firefighters' survivors and for training and equipment, and now, with "Rescue Me," he has found a way to honor New York's Bravest. ◆

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THE ART WORLD

SEEING AND READING

Ed Ruscha at the Whitney.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

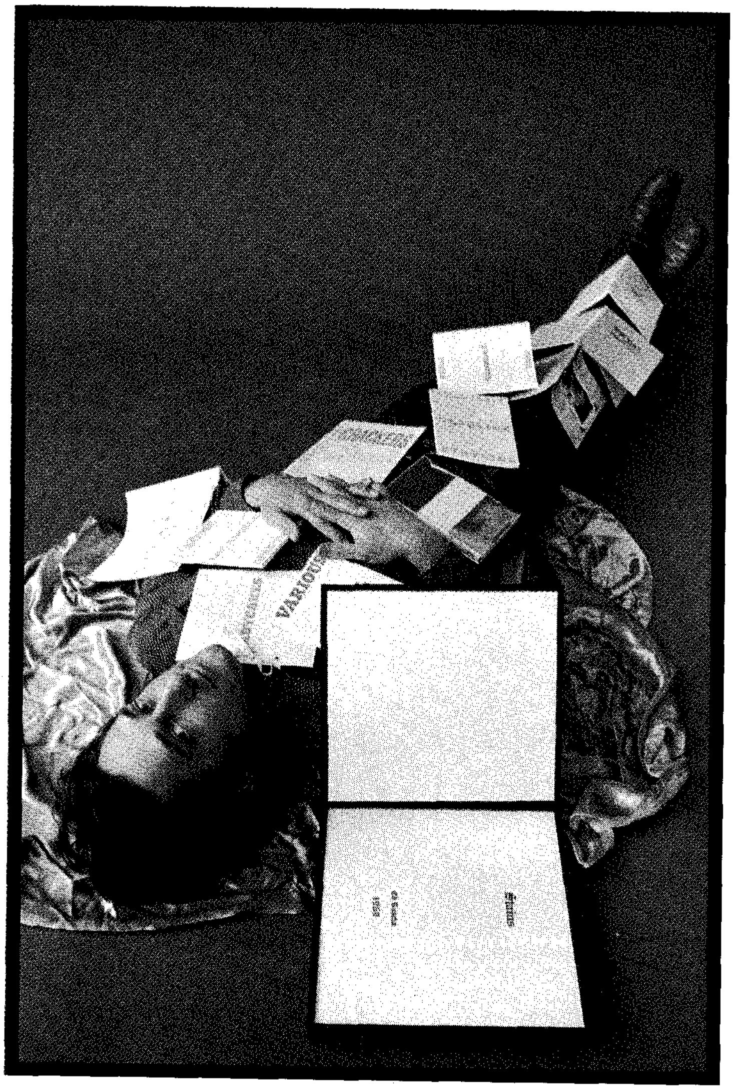
Ed Ruscha, whose work is currently on view at the Whitney in a retrospective of his drawings, "Cotton Puffs, Q-Tips, Smoke and Mirrors," and in a show of his well-known photographic books and far less familiar photographs, "Ed Ruscha and Photography," is one of the four most innovative and influential American artists to have emerged in the nineteen-sixties, along with Andy Warhol, Donald Judd, and Bruce Nauman. This is not a self-evident statement. Warhol, Judd, and Nauman modelled new relations of art to the world which continue to determine philosophies, methods, and forms of contemporary practice. Ambitious young artists must still come to terms with them, much as modern painters had to keep contending with Cézanne, Picasso, and Matisse. Ruscha's eminence is comparatively ghostly. His gnomic paintings and drawings of words and phrases and his recurrent images of, among other things, gas stations, tacky architecture, pills, mountains, sailing ships, the Hollywood sign, and "The Los Angeles County Museum on Fire" have always struck almost everybody as terrific but perhaps lightweight. For much of his forty-year career, he has been patronized as a Los Angeles—that is, a marginal—artist. What's apparent now is that his work belongs to the art of the past half century as oxygen does to air.

Ruscha was born in Nebraska, in 1937, and raised in Oklahoma City. He moved to Los Angeles in 1956 and studied at the Disney-sponsored Chouinard Art Institute (later CalArts), intending to become a commercial artist. Exposure to advanced art, notably that of Jasper Johns, inspired him to direct his gifts as a draftsman and pictorial designer to experimental, poetic ends. The choice quickly yielded brilliant results, as "Sweetwater" (1959), the earliest work in the Whitney shows, testifies. Eight green ink splashes and four blue ones, in three horizontal rows, occupy a rectangle above the title word, which, like the rectangle, is crisply printed in letterpress. This schematic landscape juxtaposes signs of spontaneity (nature) and deliberation (culture) with swift, amusing elegance. It points toward the more integral effect of Ruscha's mature word drawings, such as renderings, in graphite or gunpowder, of "lisp" in script formed of a ribbon of paper or "pool" in puddled liquid. The effect of such works is a tantalizing standoff, in the brain, between looking and reading.

You can't look at a word and read it at the same time, any more than you can simultaneously kneel and jump. You may think you can, because the toggle between the two mental operations is so fast. Graphic advertisers play that switch back and forth. Ruscha learned to freeze it in mid-throw, causing a helpless, not unpleasant buzz at the controls of consciousness. At one extreme, he intensifies looking with beautiful texture and color, sometimes in strange stains (tobacco, lettuce, blood). At the other, he electrifies reading with verbal wit. Bodiless voices declare, in capital letters, "they called her Styrene," "honey, I twisted through more damn traffic today," and "brave men run in my family." There are plays on orthography ("he enjoys the co. of women"), scraps of commercial babble ("n' dinette sets"), resounding nonsense ("one night stand forever"), unwitting portents ("discontinued china"), and plausible-sounding but absurd entities, of which a favorite of mine is "aerosol particles suspended in haze." You can't suspend anything in haze, because haze is a condition, not a substance. But the phrase's ring of scientific truth, sold by the beauty of the words and of their ground rubbed with dry pigments (in black and a dispirited tan), won't quit. A concurrent show of new drawings at the uptown Gagosian Gallery sports palindromes, among them "senile felines," "starbrats," "borrow or rob," and "Tulsa slut."

For seven months in 1961, Ruscha travelled widely in Europe, driving a tinny

Citroën Deux Chevaux. It was a voyage of discovery, memorialized in "Ed Ruscha and Photography" by a revelatory series of small black-and-white photographs taken with a two-lens camera (the kind you look down into, at a pane of frosted glass, to view the subject). Ruscha was transfixed by signs ("Galerie d'Arts & Lettres" above a curtained window, "Total" snazzily lettered on the side of a grim provincial building) and by things and places that were somehow ripe with signification (an isolated trolley car, pigs' heads in a butcher's shop, Greek ruins). Many of the starkly composed shots recall the magical detachment of Eugène Atget or Walker Evans (both known to the young Ruscha from his studies), only more so. Ruscha's expressive style is often mistakenly called "deadpan." Really, it's no-pan: an attitude of anyone and no one, which seems to have gelled for him in the vulnerable gaze of an innocent abroad. He soon turned that gaze upon his adopted home town, systematized in the documentary delirium of such books as "Thirtyfour Parking Lots in Los Angeles" (shot from the air) and the almost twenty-five-foot-long foldout "Every Building on the Sunset Strip."



Ruscha in 1970. His style is often called "deadpan"—it's really no-pan.

JERRY MCMILLAN/CRAIG KRULL GALLERY

The dominant problem of pictorial art since the nineteen-fifties is photography, and, by extension, film and video. The basilisk eye of the camera has withered the pride of handworked mediums. Painting survives on a case-by-case basis, its successes amounting to special exemptions from a verdict of history. Ruscha's importance looms in this context. He may be the first artist who, as he recently remarked, "came to painting through photography." In her catalogue introduction, Margit Rowell, the curator of "Cotton Puffs," makes much of Ruscha's photographic way of thinking, no less than of seeing—a mental knack for framing and flattening thoughts themselves, as well as things. A word is a thought, of course. But any image, including a photograph, may become an instrument of sufficiently lucid cogitation. Ruscha's textless books (sixteen of them, made between 1963 and 1978; the first, "Twentysix Gasoline Stations," was shot along Route 66 between Oklahoma City and Los Angeles) are distilled ideas, often subtle. (He selected his parking lots, he has said, less for their geometries than for their patterns of motor-oil stains—a found graphic art of the driving masses.) The form of the books, both physical and conceptual—their bookness—utterly subordinates the constituent photographs.

The influence of Ruscha on other artists is hard to grasp precisely because it is so pervasive and profound, a matter not of a particular visual style but of aesthetic consciousness in general. Certainly, he affected art photographers, including Americans like Stephen Shore and Lewis Baltz and the great German Thomas Struth. The German painter Anselm Kiefer has said that his own fruitful involvement with book forms began in response to Ruscha. Artists have always been quicker than most critics (with the chief exception of his friend and frequent exegete Dave Hickey) to catch Ruscha's drift; witness the persistent imputations of "irony" in critics' writings about him. His art is not ironic, for two reasons. First, its rhetorical posture is egoless; there's nobody there to underwrite either sincerity or its contradiction. Second, as a consequence, the humorous thoughts and moody feelings that the works advance and evoke are as ingenuous as sunshine.

Granted, Ruscha's insouciance can unsettle. His playfulness with languages, both visual and verbal, suggests a conviction that they are little more than toys. A vast, breezy skepticism keeps his outlook fresh and clear. It gains philosophical traction from not sparing himself—his profession ("Edward Ruscha, Young Artist," read a business card that he issued in 1968), his stylistic penchants ("romance with liquids," confesses one drawing), his emotions ("despair and disgust," another shares), and his Catholic spiritual bent ("various miracles"). His most telling choice of words, for me, is a bit of Shakespeare that he incorporated into a mural at a library in Miami: "Words without thoughts never to Heaven go." A dramatic irony attends those words in "Hamlet." Had the futility of Claudius's prayer been suspected by Hamlet, the King would not be alive to complain of it—thereby depriving Ruscha of a beautiful, dire sentiment. Ruscha plays it straight, with tenderness. For him, an all-forgiving Heaven smiles upon the prevalence of our failures to communicate. ♦

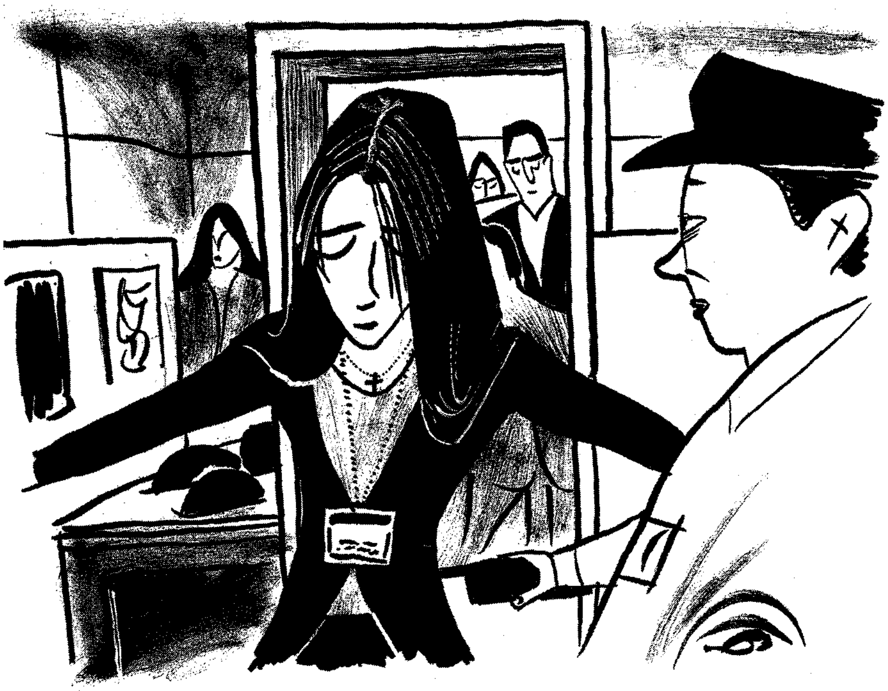
THE CURRENT CINEMA

TEEN JOBS

"Maria Full of Grace" and "The Door in the Floor."

BY DAVID DENBY

Maria (Catalina Sandino Moreno), the heroine of the superb independent film "Maria Full of Grace," arrives early in life at an awful moment of decision: she must either take a big risk with her future or fall into the nullity of routine, perhaps forever. Most people don't recognize that kind of moment when it happens, but Maria, who is seventeen and works in a factory in a small Colombian city near Bogotá, stripping the thorns off rose stems, fully grasps what's at stake. That's why she has grace—she's ignorant of many things but not of her limited chances. Her job will lead nowhere, and the wishy-washy young man who has got her pregnant isn't worth sticking around for. Her sister is unmarried with a baby and no money, and Maria is heading in the same direction. When a young hustler lures her to Bogotá on his motorbike, it doesn't take long to find out that he wants more than her company. He suggests that she become a "mule," carrying heroin into the United States. The pay is five thousand dollars a trip—about three times the average yearly income in Colombia. Moral considerations are hardly an issue. Maria's instincts tell her that she has to take the job, dangerous as it is, in order to survive.



Catalina Sandino Moreno plays a young woman who takes a big chance.

TOM BACHTELL

Joshua Marston, a thirty-five-year-old N.Y.U. film-school graduate, nosed around Colombia and the Colombian neighborhoods of New York before beginning to shoot "Maria," his first full-length feature. He did his homework and came up with one of the emblematic migration stories of our time. Marston would probably have made an interesting movie no matter how he had shot it, but the way he dramatized the material seems instinctively right: he goes detail by detail, emotion by emotion, eliding nothing, exaggerating nothing. We are with Maria, a smart, slightly prickly girl, every inch of the way, and Moreno, who was born in Bogotá and has never been in a movie before, flourishes under the attention. She's a dark-eyed, lustrously beautiful actress who can convincingly play a small-town girl without condescension. Her Maria has what we would call "attitude," yet she sets about learning a mule's job with a schoolgirl's proper application. The drug-trade professionals in Bogotá speak gently to Maria as they teach her, and the other mules, all of them young women, how to swallow perhaps twenty-five ounces of heroin, divided into small portions, each portion wrapped in a finger of a surgical glove. (They practice by swallowing large grapes.) After a long flight, they will excrete the pellets in New Jersey.

At times, the men seem softly seductive, like young pimps—until they administer the pellets. Then they become as stern as priests offering holy wafers at Mass. The sardonic associations with sexual and religious rituals are there for us to see without Marston's harping on them. He also trusts us to understand that the exploitation of women is merely one aspect of the implacable cruelty of a society corrupted by drugs. Before leaving Bogotá, Maria runs into other mules, including a friend from her home town, and Marston develops a strong fellowship among them, but the movie remains devoted to Maria's story. Since we see everything from her point of view, the amoral powers of identification—the complicity that a visual medium is so good at inducing—take over our responses; Maria may be doing something wrong, but we desperately want her not to get caught. She goes through a harrowing flight and a perilous customs interrogation, and then falls into the thuggish hands of the drug network at its New Jersey end. When one of the girls dies, after a pellet opens in her stomach, Maria grabs the rest of the heroin and heads for the Colombian community in Jackson Heights. The local residents are unfazed; they know that mules come and go, and that many die. Maria's story—an everyday experience of terror which has the shape of a fable—may not seem important enough, or sympathetic enough, or violent enough for a Hollywood feature, but for those of us who want to know the details, the habits, the emotions of this particular coming-to-America story, the absence of hype is a relief. The reality is scary enough.

Tod Williams's "The Door in the Floor," adapted from the John Irving novel "A Widow for One Year," has the look of American classicism: gray-shingled Hamptons houses, rolling lawns in subdued greens; an aura of quiet intensity and lacerating intimacy. That's quite a virtue, and I wish I could say that the movie was great, because it certainly begins well. "The Door in the Floor" is about a couple who are both held together and separated by grief. Ted Cole (Jeff Bridges), a successful children's-book writer and illustrator, and his wife, Marion (Kim Basinger), live in an elegant haunted house: their four-bedroomer on the water is filled with pictures of their dead sons—prep-school boys who were killed in an accident. The chief curator of this memorial is their four-year-old daughter, who has become obsessed with the pictures of her brothers. Ted and Marion deal with their grief in opposite ways: he's a drinker, rough on women, increasingly lazy, and as selfish as a bear in a garbage dump. But Ted is also fully, flagrantly alive. Naked, at night, he holds his daughter high in his arms; by day, he rampages around the Hamptons in a loose-flowing dressing gown, which he removes for a series of mistresses. Ted, a lout with charm, has released the natural man beneath the shell of propriety. Marion, on the other hand, has disappeared inside herself; she's dead to her husband and to her daughter, who desperately needs her. She hardly moves; mostly, she stares. Tod Williams, directing his second film, achieves an atmosphere of suppressed anger and loss without laying on the anguish. There's a playful spark—especially in Bridges's roistering performance—that occasionally ignites the movie's exquisite surface. Williams did the adaptation himself, and the generally sparse, suggestive dialogue gives way, now and then, to a burst of candor that arrives like a slap. Williams has talent, daring, and taste. What he may lack, right now, is judgment.

An outsider enters this disintegrating marriage—Eddie (Jon Foster), a pale and lanky sixteen-year-old. Eddie is polite, even awestruck, by the writer and his beautiful wife. But Eddie also has the intellectual and erotic ambitions of a very young man who trusts his instincts. Ted hires him to be his assistant, but the boy's real job, we understand, is to sleep with the zombie Marion. Eddie reminds her of one of her dead sons, and Ted seems to think that he will bring his wife back to life—or something like that. We don't really know what he has in mind, since, after the kid starts on his perverse task, Ted takes pleasure in humiliating him in minor ways. There's perversity on all sides of this triangle—Kim Basinger is fifty, and Jon Foster is nineteen—but it's passed over, without much dramatic development, or even ordinary comment. Psychologically, the material doesn't entirely make sense and is rather unappealing. Is Ted trying to awaken his wife or destroy her? What in the world does Marion think she's doing by making a teen-ager fall in love with her? Basinger is so kindly and so beautifully ravaged—age has only increased her loveliness—that we find it hard to judge her harshly for neglecting her little girl or for fooling with this boy, but, by any standard, Marion has become a monster. Half-crazy behavior, of course, is hardly beyond the pale of drama, but the movie skips over its own oddities, a habit of avoidance that goes back to the writing of John Irving, who throws sex, murder, rape, castration, and dead children into his novels without quite working out the implications or examining the reverberations.

Ted tells stories, both fictional and real-life tales, and "The Door in the Floor" is full of recurring verbal motifs and metaphors (starting with the title). Williams is trying to make literary décor serve as dramatic foundation, but it can't. The sex scenes between Foster and Basinger are brought off subtly, with gentle humor, but, in a case like this, tastefulness may also be a form of avoidance—a way of keeping to a tony surface when the situation calls out for emotion and mess. The sex is so unimpassioned that we don't know what Marion is getting out of the affair, which, in any case, leaves us with a creepy feeling. After a while, the movie's considerable equanimity dribbles away. In the person of Jeff Bridges, Ted could have been a major figure—a louse who nevertheless embodies a larger humanity than tidier men—but by the end he seems merely diminished; he billows across a lawn in his dressing gown, a survivor descending into triviality. It turns out that Tod Williams has adapted only the first third of Irving's novel. "The Door in the Floor" is a fragment passing itself off as a whole, and, for all its handsomeness and its occasional moments of piercing intelligence, it's a fundamentally depressing piece of work—not because it deals with tragic events and memories but because the characters seem hapless and even stupid, and the writer-director can't, or won't, take control. ♦

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THE BACK PAGE BY PAUL SIMMS

NEW DETAILS SURFACE

> Vice President Dick Cheney cursed at Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Vermont Democrat, *in* a confrontation on the Senate floor while members were having their annual group picture taken earlier this week. . . . According to [an] aide, Mr. Cheney . . . responded with a barnyard epithet, urging Mr. Leahy to perform an anatomical sexual impossibility.
>
> —*The Washington Times.*

After Mr. Cheney successfully delivered the epithet and started to walk away, Mr. Leahy—sotto voce—referred to the Vice-President using a term more often heard in taverns and locker rooms than in the august Senate chamber, a term that refers to a sexual act commonly acknowledged as taboo among all cultures that proscribe incestuous contact between a mother and a son.

Mr. Cheney—apparently hearing Mr. Leahy's remark—stopped, turned, and invited his colleague from across the aisle to engage in a sexual act that is considered a felony in some states, and which involves oral-genital contact.

Mr. Leahy then suggested that the president of the Senate take his gavel and use it to perform an act that, while not technically impossible in anatomical terms, would certainly be considered both unseemly and unhygienic, and which would require an unusual combination of single-minded ambition and physical relaxation.

Mr. Cheney wasted no time in informing Mr. Leahy that he should feel free to perform yet another anatomical impossibility—this one involving aviation, a standard sexual act, and a rolling doughnut.

At this point, according to observers, both statesmen decided—by seemingly unspoken mutual consent—to abandon the gutter patois of the common carnival worker and to resort instead to an eminently more quotable (but, to those not versed in the vagaries of hip-hop idiom, more confusing) exchange of viewpoints.

"Oh, it's like that?" Mr. Cheney queried.

"Whut? Whut?" Mr. Leahy shot back.

"Once again," Mr. Cheney replied (quite obviously quoting a lyric from Ice Cube's 1990 album, "AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted"), "it's on."

As a quick-thinking senatorial aide switched on the Senate's public-address system and cued up the infamous "Seven Minutes of Funk" break, Mr. Leahy and Mr. Cheney went head-to-head in what can only be described as a "take no prisoners" freestyle rap battle.

FILIP PAGOWSKI

Most of the rhymes kicked therein cannot be quoted in a family publication, but observers gave Mr. Cheney credit for his deceptively laid-back flow. Mr. Leahy was applauded for managing to rhyme the phrases "unethical for certain," "crude oil spurtin'," and "like Halliburton."

Despite the fact that both participants brought their A-game and succeeded in dropping mad scientifics, the bout seemed to end in a draw.

Unfortunately, as other senators (along with assorted aides and support-staff members) were casting their votes to decide the winner, using the admittedly subjective but generally accepted "Make some noise up in here!" protocols, Mr. Cheney and Mr. Leahy took the proceedings to what one aide accurately described as "the next level."

Edward M. Kennedy (D.-Mass.) was the first to notice that the two men were circling each other, Mr. Cheney brandishing a switchblade and Mr. Leahy the jagged neck of a broken bottle.

"Oh, snap!" Mr. Kennedy recalls thinking at the time. "It's getting kind of hectic up in this piece."

But before either of the aggrieved public servants could bust a potentially injurious move on his rival, cooler heads prevailed: a veteran Capitol Hill security guard pacified the bloodthirsty white men (Mr. Leahy first, then Mr. Cheney) with a shot from a tranquillizer gun. He then had them returned to their cages in the sub-basement of the Old Executive Office Building, where both men are kept and fed during non-business hours under the watchful eye of a volunteer from Washington's National Zoo.

(In a related story, an AM talk-radio host in Billings, Montana, who expressed his disappointment with the behavior of Mr. Cheney and Mr. Leahy—on the air, he asked his listeners, "Do we taxpayers really have time for this kind of crap?"—was fined five hundred thousand dollars for violating the F.C.C.'s recent, Senate-approved guidelines prohibiting explicit references to human excrement.) ♦

Smoke detectors Taximeters Airport screening devices Batteries Exit signs Conveyor belts Diapers Water disinfection Laboratory planning and design High-speed serial data cable assemblies Pneumatic filters Electric valve actuators Warning lights Coffee cups Power strips Strainers Electrical raceways Integrated fire protection cabinets Static control devices PC boards Master terminal boxes Lighting controls Bus and expansion slot connectors Subsystem integration and full-system assembly Variable-flow regulator assemblies Protection against electrical supply interruption Abrasion protection products Vehicle tactical repeaters Air conditioning equipment and systems Multi-coaxial cables Nasopharyngeal sensors Wastewater treatment plant design and engineering Rotational sensors Micro K relays Industrial automation Plastic knives, forks, and spoons Fire and emergency annunciators Drawer connectors LEDs Microelectronic sub-assembly **Firefighter breathing systems** Ground fault detector protective relays Solenoids Heavy-duty miniature applicators Absorbents and desiccants Voice networks Sea plows for undersea excavation Insulators Medical electrode gels Welded steel tubing Micropatch antennas Filters Thermocouple cables Avionics Polyethylene stretch films Backplane connector systems Lamps Conformal antennas Serving trays Battery chargers Drills Panel boards Audio receivers Wire basket cable trays Pressure vessel clamps Snow melting mats Matrix switchers Amplitude measurement equipment Salve Telephony analysis Automatic door controls Well cleaners and developers Automotive micro power relays Plastic protective sheeting Patch cable Automotive mini power relays Transmission line accessories hazard detection products Building wraps Vending machine components Scales Intuitive LCD and CRT touchmonitors USB connectors Cable clamps Micropneumatic systems Cable ducting systems Sealants and gels Electrical metallic tubing set-screw connectors and couplings Insulation facers Call center monitoring services Relays with forcibly-guided contacts Spa controls Industrial control hybrids Gas masks Laser rangefinders Sodium bicarbonate based extinguishing agents Flame-retardant drapery systems Resuscitators for infants and children Digital watch parts Shade canopy accessories Barrier strips Chalkboards Therapeutic ultrasound PIN photo diode modules Medical monitoring services Check valves Resin systems Chemical oxygen generators All-in-one touch computers Chartering cable ships Elastic bandages Wireless systems Chillers Semiconductor heat sinks Digital audio services Automotive module relays Surface mounted cabinets Rotary switches Flame retardants Pressure seal closures Electric portable air compressors Circuit breakers Automotive quality inspection equipment Solid-state components Gas discharge tube replacements Components for camcorders Panel indicators Heat isolation devices Explosion-proof detectors Climate monitoring Hazardous material protective suits Solid-state subsystems Signal magnetics Passive electronics Medical oxygen delivery Grounding connectors Telescoping sign support systems Broadband driver amplifiers Champagne glasses Drinking bottles Polymeric and porcelain surge arrestors for distribution and transmission networks Automotive power relays Garment hangers Microcoaxial assemblies Snack food packaging Modem cable assemblies Industrial control switches Continuous-slot metal framing Landfill development Multi-mode radar Patch cable assemblies Shielded and coaxial cable slices Wine glasses Flame-retardant tape Range hoods Halogen-free cables for commercial and offshore applications Absorbable monofilament sutures Cable TV converters Terminals and connectors for underground networks Syringe dispensers Cordless telephone batteries Fire protection systems Tubing for outdoor furniture framing Sensor wraps Easels PIN diodes High-performance solid state relays and power controllers Wire harness tape Ceramic burners Electrical equipment for saunas Cylindrical control connectors Terminals and splices Security systems Relay sockets and accessories Arson detection Galvanized steel tubing Paperboard Counters and timers Sealed connectors Databus assemblies Television sets DC converters Subcutaneous sensors Pipe and tube products Electrical tape High pass filter inductors Pistol grip hand tool systems for IDCs Adhesive tape Segmentally welded pipe fittings USB cables Construction management Deactivators International mains adaptors Suction instruments Test equipment Steel box connectors Calibration equipment and services Plastic tumblers Cable trays Verified audio detection Thermoplastic piping systems Coaxial cable terminators Pigtail cable assemblies Waveguides Plastics engineering Institutional timekeeping Photocopiers Cabled and blind-mate power connectors High-performance connectors Safety relief valves Access floor modules Halogen-free wire Power systems Raised face flanges Connectors for high-voltage substations Flexible non-metallic conduit Reduced wall flexible metal conduit Catheters Medication nebulizers Digital metering systems Wiring harness sockets Automobile steering columns Pediatric monitoring equipment Cable design conductors Flame-retardant tubing for nuclear environments Rooftop walkways Digital products Air sampling equipment Voltage wheels Customized point-of-sale receipts Digital proofing Power tool switches Chokes Medical diagnostics Sound mixers Air traffic control equipment Digital visual interface products Vertical drain membranes and radiant barriers Cabinet power systems Wall track systems DIP switches Resistor protection Thermostats Electrical transformers High-performance RF/microwave antennas Lighting for public services Video cables Thermal circuit breakers Video endoscopy Cable assemblies Irrigation pipe [illegible] connectors Potassium bicarbonate-based extinguishing agents Megaphone components Calculators Institutional can liners [illegible] attenuators Wafer gear Varactors Coaxial cables Patient monitoring cables Drop cloths Alarms for hazardous areas [illegible] components Stormwater and wastewater studies Card readers with web-based authentication Printer cable assem[illegible] services Amusement machine components Disposable manual resuscitators Systems for offshore oil and gas installations P[illegible] Airport lighting systems Soldering equipment Long-haul, transoceanic cable systems Entry modules Microsurgical needles Cryogenic valves Wiring harness design software Automotive components Computer-assisted design services Porcelain disc insulators Flex and rigid circuits Diagnostic procedure trays Inkjet fluids Diagnostic and stress testing Landscape plastic sheeting Rechargeable car flashlights Memory card receptacles Spirometry systems Automatic blood pressure infusors Coated and cloth-backed building and construction tapes Power magnetics Exhausters Ultraviolet disinfection systems Moisture analysis equipment Flange gaskets with bulb elastometers Exotic alloys Professional fire department hardware Custom sterilizable cable assemblies Skin effect trace systems Dental dressings and sutures Parts for lawn and garden equipment Tape measures Flame detectors Ribbon cables Carpet backing Parallel groove clamps Graphic arts tape Extended coverage fire sprinkler heads Hand pumps Climate control monitoring Satellite radio and digital audio systems Jacket compounds Galvanized steel armor with PVC jackets Irrigation pumps Utility cabinets Cyanoacrylate "super glue" adhesives Large-screen video projectors Eye pads Arterial extension sets Paper mill wraps Fence framework Distribution panels Continuous timers Protective breathing equipment Special purpose spiral antennas Automatic pick, place and press Power toggle switches Fiber-optic connectors Veterinary medical products Bypass valves Carbon dioxide gas transmitters Specialty chemicals Rainfall gauges Alarms for motor vehicles Water sampling and analysis Fingerprint identification Mobile security systems Cable ties Firefighting flares Multiplier diodes Fireproof cables Drum core magnetics Audio receivers Flexible exhaust connectors Isolators and circulators Magnet wire termination machines Dual hybrids Static measuring equipment Hand-held radios Cable management accessories Steam-tracing products Extrusion laminating Parking deck PVC-jacketed metal clad cable Factory automation cables Steelwork fixings Airport construction management Instrument winterization Cotton balls Pipe for recreational equipment Self-adhesive cable clips Multi-pair high flexibility cables Fixed cable termination adapters Butterfly valves Portable memory Components for CD recorders and players Telemetry systems Audio production services Integrated molding/plating technology Telephone systems Safety goggles Reverse cutting sutures Decorative shields Temperature and pressure gauges Commercial-quality steel tubing Laser diodes Temperature sensors Connection droppers Dry-erase marker boards Feminine hygiene products Storage tanks Analgesics First aid kits Thermal controls Computer-assisted surgery Power modules Subminiature D connectors Front-connected sockets Digital attenuators Automated teller machine components Spring pin coax probe assemblies Control panels Wet pipe sprinkler systems Alarm verification Security keypads Pain management products Helical gears Roadway and tunnel management systems Printed circuit terminals Galvanized round signposts Rocker and paddle switches Microwave components Roof and gutter heating cables Arson detection Voice amplifiers Fall arrest systems High-voltage connectors Power entry modules Custom broadband networks Steel threadable sprinkler pipe Accounting software Ultrasound cable assemblies Protective clothing for emergency workers Flare launchers Dry pipe systems Cable tie guns Broadband amplifiers Rectangular heavy-duty connectors Discharge devices Vibration dampers Electromagnetic flow readers Laser components Advanced composites Coaxial connectors Adhesive covers Flat steel plates Elastomeric connectors Passive fiber-optic hardware Singulation systems Electrosurgical devices Coffee service kits Automotive radar sensors Electrical metallic tubing compression connectors and couplings Intercommunication devices Customized valves Dry pipe valves Flexible hoses Curing ovens Insulated ground metal clad cables Digital satellite radio antennas Perimeter door and window protection systems Anemometers Cosmetic surgery needles Flexible non-metallic conduit Supply cylinder assemblies Alarm communication systems Identification products Flexible piping equipment Rayon balls Dedicated fiber pair

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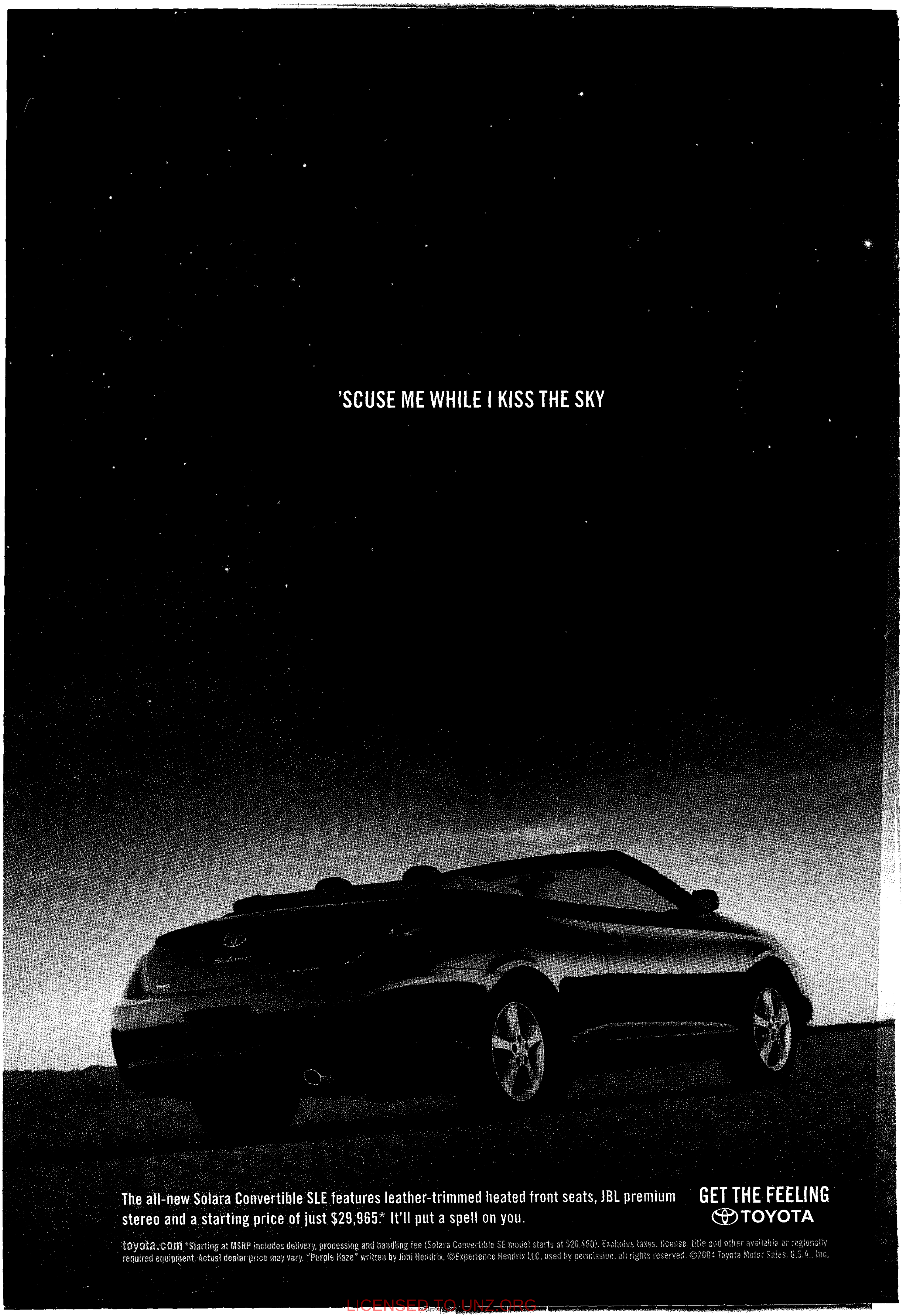

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